



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT NOVEMBER 2000

College of North West London

SUMMARY

The College of North West London provides satisfactory training in construction and engineering. These two areas are well resourced. Training in foundation for work is less than satisfactory, with poorly planned training and recording of activities. Equal opportunities practices are good in the college but do not extend to the workplace. There is good pastoral support for trainees. However, training plans are not individualised and reviews are not effective. Changes to the management of the training have, as yet, had little impact on the training and assessment in the workplace. There are no service level agreements between the college's training arm and the curriculum faculties. The quality assurance arrangements have a beneficial effect on the training carried out in the college, but do not assure the quality of training in the workplace.

GRADES

| OCCUPATIONAL AREAS | GRADE |
|---------------------|-------|
| Construction | 3 |
| Engineering | 3 |
| Foundation for work | 4 |

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good-quality off-the-job training in construction and engineering
- ◆ good initiative to enhance training and employability in construction
- ◆ good promotion of equal opportunities in the college

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor planning and recording of on-the-job training
- ◆ missed opportunities for work-based assessment
- ◆ poor understanding of NVQ processes and procedures by most employers
- ◆ equal opportunities policies and procedures not specific to work-based training
- ◆ extremely poor individual training plans
- ◆ poorly managed training programmes
- ◆ inadequate quality assurance arrangements

INTRODUCTION

1. The College of North West London (CNWL) is a large general further education college with three sites (Willesden, Wembley Park and Kilburn) situated in the borough of Brent. The college has approximately 13,000 students and 600 full- and part-time staff. It has provided government-funded, work-based training since 1996 through the European, Training and Enterprise division (ET&E) which is based at the Wembley Park site. ET&E manages the college's training provision. The teachers in the relevant curriculum faculties provide the off-the-job training and assessment. The college provides training in construction, engineering and foundation for work. The business administration area of work was not inspected owing to the low number of trainees. However, this occupational sector was inspected in the context of the New Deal full-time education and training. There are presently 101 trainees on training programmes, of whom 28 are modern apprentices, 44 are national trainees and 10 are on other training programmes. At the time of the inspection trainees are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3 in electrical installation, plumbing, carpentry, refrigeration and air-conditioning, and automotive engineering. There are 19 trainees on the life skills programme of the Learning Gateway, the government's training initiative for 16 and 17 year olds. These include ten trainees on a programme entitled 'Fast Forward' which offers taster courses in craft and building services, and four on a similar programme related to motor vehicle maintenance. The college also has a contract for work-based training for adults, but at the time of the inspection there were no trainees. There are 44 clients on the New Deal, full-time education and training option working towards qualifications in information technology with a local subcontractor and five clients on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes at the college.

2. The vice-principal for partnership and development is responsible for ET&E. A manager who has 12.5 full-time staff runs the division. The college receives 82 per cent of its income from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). The remaining 18 per cent comes from a variety of sources including: tuition fees, the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB); Fusion, the college's commercial training company, the contracts with North West London Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), Hertfordshire Training and Enterprise Council (Herts TEC) and the Employment Service.

3. CNWL serves the local community and areas to the north and west of London. Its specialisation in construction and engineering attracts trainees from a wider catchment area. The borough of Brent, in which the college is situated, has a population of 242,000. In Brent, people from minority ethnic groups form almost half the population, an estimated 45 per cent of the community, compared with Inner London at 23 per cent, and the national average of 6.2 per cent. It is predicted that Brent will have a majority of ethnic minority residents by 2001. People of Asian origin form the largest minority ethnic group, about 19 per cent of the population. There are over 15,000 refugees and 1,900 asylum seekers in the

borough. Some areas in the south of Brent, such as Harlesden, South Kilburn and Stonebridge, experience high levels of social deprivation, including high unemployment rates and poor housing.. Since experiencing high unemployment levels in 1993, the local economy has expanded, with additional jobs and major employment growth occurring in high technology, manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, leisure and tourism and service industries. In August 2000 the unemployment rate in Brent stood at 5.5 per cent compared with London at 4 per cent and the national average at 3.3 per cent. In 1999, the percentage of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates in secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above in Brent was 43 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. ET&E conducted its first self-assessment process in 1999 to prepare for the Brent area inspection in May 2000. A revised self-assessment report and action plan was produced in preparation for the Training Standards Council's inspection in November 2000. A draft report was prepared, taking into account annual performance data, surveys, changes in funding and contracts. Employers, faculties in the college and trainees had little involvement in the process. The draft was then circulated to all ET&E staff for comment and amendments. This process was repeated until a consensus was reached among the ET&E team. The final draft was presented and agreed at an ET&E staff meeting. The report was forwarded to the vice- principal for curriculum and quality who took up any relevant issues with the relevant heads of curriculum faculties.

5. A team of six inspectors spent a total of 30 days at CNWL in November 2000. The team worked jointly with a team of FEFC inspectors during this time, sharing information and each other's findings. The occupational areas inspected jointly were construction and engineering, as well as the generic aspects of training. Inspectors met with a total of 43 trainees and 12 work-based supervisors. Twelve employers were visited. Inspectors undertook 35 interviews with CNWL staff, including senior managers, middle managers, curriculum staff and ET&E staff. Thirteen portfolios and 28 trainees' files were reviewed. Both teams saw a comprehensive selection of college documents.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

| | GRADE 1 | GRADE 2 | GRADE 3 | GRADE 4 | GRADE 5 | TOTAL |
|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Construction | 1 | 3 | | | | 4 |
| Engineering | | | 2 | | | 2 |
| Foundation for work | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 3 |
| Total | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 9 |

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Construction

Grade 3

6. There are 25 trainees on training programmes in construction. On the youth programme training covers brickwork, electrical installations, plumbing, painting & decorating, and carpentry & joinery. . There are four national trainees, two are in plumbing and two in carpentry and joinery. There are 14 modern apprentices; nine are in electrical installations and five in plumbing. There are seven trainees on other training; all are in electrical installations. In addition, there are ten trainees

on the Life Skills sample programme, which is part of the Learning Gateway. This provides them with the opportunities to experience the occupational and craft skills required in the industry, prior to their employment. At recruitment, all trainees undergo induction and initial assessment to identify any additional learning needs. A combination of on- and off-the-job training follows. Off-the-job training is carried out through day release training at the Willesden campus of the college.

7. Trainees receive training in practical skills and instruction in theoretical knowledge. Additional support in basic skills is offered to those with identified needs. Trainees gain on-the-job experience with their employer. These employers range in size from sole traders to large companies, local authorities and housing associations. Retention and achievement on the programmes is satisfactory. A member of the ET&E staff carries out trainees' progress reviews. Curriculum staff hold appropriate vocational qualifications, have suitable industrial experience and have achieved assessor and internal verifier qualifications.

8. Inspectors did not agree with some of the strengths cited in the self-assessment report, which they considered to be normal practice. Inspectors verified the weaknesses and identified additional strengths and weaknesses, which were not in the report. The grade awarded was the same as that in the self- assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ wide range of training opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ trainee-led assessment in electrical installations
- ◆ good initiative to enhance training and employability in construction

GOOD PRACTICE

Much of the equipment used in plumbing, gas and electrical has been sponsored by leading equipment manufacturers. For example, combination boilers, instantaneous water heaters, unvented cylinders for plumbing, gas and cable conduit, and fittings for electrical installations. This results in trainees having access to the latest industry-standard materials and equipment for training.

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no planned on-the-job training
- ◆ poor understanding of NVQ process and procedures by most employers
- ◆ no work-based assessment
- ◆ failure to register plumbing trainees with awarding body

9. Trainees are given day release by their employers to attend college where they receive training in practical skills and instruction in theory related to the training programme they are following. The programmes are well written. The college's staff explain assessment procedures to trainees during their induction. Training workshops have recently been re-sited and refurbished and there is now a good range of training facilities, with extensive practical resources available for training and assessment. Trainees benefit from a supportive and professional approach by the college's staff. This creates a positive environment for learning.

10. Employers are supportive of training and trainees have the opportunity to gain effective occupational experience through their employers using job rotation to create sufficient varied opportunities. The encouragement and opportunities given to trainees enables them to produce work of a high standard. Trainees also recognise the relevance of the off-the-job training in relation to their workplace experience. One trainee in carpentry and joinery was working on a major construction project which involved finishing the joinery in top quality apartments in Central London.

11. At the start of their training, tutors give trainees in electrical installations books containing competence-assessment tasks, which cover details of the units and elements of their NVQ. Following training and experience in the workplace, trainees are encouraged by their tutors to identify their own competency, using as a guide the assessment task in the book provided. Trainees are encouraged to seek opportunities for assessment when they feel that they have the skills and abilities to demonstrate their competence. A system of booking-in for assessment is used; at this point, discussion with the tutor confirms, or otherwise, a trainee's readiness to complete the assessment process.

12. The college, working with the TEC, opened a one-stop shop dedicated to construction, called the Building One-Stop Shop (BOSS). The BOSS is a project funded through the Single Regeneration Budget and is based in the college. It links with a range of partners in the area with the objective of providing training in construction and opportunities for employment. ET&E has established effective links with the BOSS and a wide range of training opportunities have been developed. These include a construction skills certification scheme, courses in health and safety awareness, bursaries for the purchase of tools and equipment, updating electrical skills and training in gas installation. BOSS supports the 'Fast Forward' project which provides an initial programme of 12-weeks' training in construction crafts. Trainees have access to short programmes to give them experience of carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, plumbing, plastering, brickwork and electrical installations. Trainees who complete the programmes are offered further training in the trade of their choice and are put forward for employment with local construction companies.

13. Trainees are placed with supportive employers who provide a wide range of workplace training opportunities. However, these placements are not planned in such a way as to link with the training which takes place off the job at the college. ET&E's advisors visit trainees in their workplace to conduct progress reviews. Some trainees have had reviews carried out by different advisors. Advisors have little knowledge and experience of the construction industry and the range of qualifications currently available. Trainees' reviews are irregular and many are missed. Those that take place set few NVQ-related targets. The targets which are set are too general and are neither robust nor sufficiently detailed to guide trainees' progress.

14. Although employers support trainees by providing training with a good range of opportunities, many are not aware of the range and requirements that the NVQ

demands and the requirements to be met in the apprenticeship frameworks. Employers are unaware of the content of the off-the-job training. Opportunities to co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training are missed. Some trainees are not clear about NVQ requirements or whether it is the modern apprenticeship, or the national traineeship framework which applies to them.

15. Currently, assessment of trainees takes place in simulated off-the-job conditions. The college recognises this weakness and some trainees have been encouraged to use witness testimony to support their assessment. However, trainees are often unsure about how to collect evidence which will satisfy the requirements of the awarding body. There are no support mechanisms to address this failing. Many opportunities for work-based assessment and/or evidence collection are being missed.

16. Upon registration on the scheme, the awarding body provides trainees in plumbing with a portfolio containing information about the requirements to be met if they are to be successful. However, trainees starting the second year of their programme at CNWL are still not registered with the awarding body and are still awaiting this important programme record book. Under the awarding body's regulations trainers are unable to start assessments on their trainees' programmes.

Engineering

Grade 3

17. CNWL offers training in engineering in the occupational areas of motor vehicle, and refrigeration and air-conditioning. Trainees are recruited through a variety of routes. Many, having applied for and gained employment, are referred to the college for training by their employers. Some are referred by the careers service following enquiries by the young people about training and employment opportunities in the area. There are currently 48 trainees working towards level 2 and 3 NVQs in refrigeration and air-conditioning; 12 are modern apprentices, 33 national trainees and three are other youth trainees. CNWL is one of only three centres in the UK able to offer training and qualifications in air-conditioning and refrigeration. Trainees spend two years working towards the achievement of NVQs at level 2 and are able to achieve the level 3 award within a further period of two years. There are 13 trainees working towards motor vehicle qualifications. Seven are national trainees, one is working towards motor vehicle body repair at level 2, and the remainder are working towards the award in vehicle mechanical and electronic systems, also at level 2. There are two modern apprentices working towards level 3 vehicle mechanical and electronic systems. Four trainees are following a special motor vehicle training 'taster' programme which offers them the opportunity of sampling the different aspects of motor vehicle training, body work, paint and mechanical over a period of six weeks. All other trainees attend CNWL for their off-the-job training, generally through day release or evening class attendance.

18. The self-assessment report identified one strength and one weakness with which the inspectors agreed, but failed to identify other strengths and weaknesses

that were found during inspection. The inspectors awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ flexible assessment procedures in air-conditioning and refrigeration
- ◆ additional qualifications taken and achieved
- ◆ good retention and achievement in air-conditioning and refrigeration

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ missed opportunities for work-based assessment
- ◆ poor planning and recording of on-the-job training
- ◆ little knowledge of NVQs by most employers

19. Trainees receive off-the-job training at the college in well-equipped workshops and classrooms. However, the motor vehicle workshop at one site is poorly decorated and cluttered with old equipment. Curriculum staff are well qualified and experienced in their occupational fields. The off-the-job training is good, with good planning of sessions and a comprehensive system of internal verification. As part of the quality assurance procedures, college staff observe each other's sessions. All assessments for air-conditioning and refrigeration are carried out at the college, while some assessment at the workplace has recently been introduced in motor vehicle engineering. Witness statements from the workplace are sometimes used as assessment evidence for both awards.

20. There are flexible assessment procedures in air-conditioning and refrigeration for first-year trainees. The awarding body requires that a number of assessments be carried out during the first year. Tutors ensure that these assessments are carried out only when they feel that the trainee is competent in the particular tasks to be assessed. Sometimes it is found that some trainees have not carried out the number of assessment required to progress to the second year. If tutors feel that there are genuine reasons for this omission, periods of illness for example, and that the trainee has demonstrated a good standard of work throughout the year, arrangements are made to carry out the assessments during the early part of the trainees' second year. These trainees attend additional evening sessions from September to December in their second year to make good the deficit.

21. Trainees in air-conditioning and refrigeration are able to achieve additional awards while working towards their NVQs. The awarding body requires trainees to achieve certain additional awards before the NVQ can be awarded. The college tutors ensure that trainees achieve certificates in refrigerant handling, fire fighting, first aid and site safety early in their programme. These awards are considered essential by the awarding body, and the industry generally, to ensure that trainees

have the necessary basic competencies needed to carry out work-based training in a safe and responsible manner. Achieving these basic competencies at an early stage in their training is particularly important for trainees in this industry, since most of the work that they undertake is on site in a wide range of industrial situations.

22. There are high rates of retention and achievement for air-conditioning and refrigeration trainees. Seventy-nine per cent of those trainees targeted to achieve their qualification during the last academic year achieved NVQ level 2 or 3. The college is a recognised centre for air-conditioning and refrigeration training and the trainees' results compare well with the overall achievement results for the college which show over 80 per cent achieving levels 2 and 3. The retention rate for motor vehicle trainees is 80 per cent with an achievement rate for NVQ level 2 at 60 per cent. One trainee has achieved a full modern apprenticeship, completing all NVQ and key skill requirements in the vehicle body and paint operations award at level 3. Another trainee has one more unit to complete in heavy vehicle mechanical and electronic systems to complete his apprenticeship.

23. There are missed opportunities for work-based assessment on both programmes. Evidence from work-based activities in motor vehicle engineering usually consists of completed job cards of tasks carried out at the work placement. All assessment for air conditioning and refrigeration takes place at the college. Tutors are aware that both awarding bodies have changed their assessment requirements and that some on-the-job assessment by direct observation is now required. One motor vehicle tutor has started some assessment at the workplace but this is a new initiative and does not cover the assessment needs of all trainees.

24. Most trainees are working with good employers who offer a wide range of training opportunities and possibilities for assessment at the workplace. For example, some trainees work for a company specialising in air-conditioning servicing and installation based at a large airport. Trainees are required to work to the high standards required by the British Airports Authority. Another trainee is employed by a company which is responsible for the maintenance of all engineering services for a division of a major airline housed in several large office blocks and aircraft hangars.

25. On-the-job training is poorly planned and recorded. While there is good on-the-job training taking place, there is no co-ordination with the off-the-job training. Individual training plans are poor and do not reflect the wide range of training being undertaken. Employers do not contribute to the planning of the training programme and have little influence on the content. Most are not aware of optional units of competence where these are applicable, and are not involved in deciding which units their trainees will pursue.

26. Most employers have little knowledge of NVQs and are unable to assist the trainees with the identification of assessment opportunities and/or evidence that may be used towards the achievement of the NVQ. Employers recognise the importance of good training in the industry and most would welcome the

opportunity to ensure that their trainees obtain a good training experience. Some employers in the air-conditioning industry are willing to assist with the assessment process and have undertaken training to equip them to carry out this function. ET&E, in conjunction with the technology faculty at college recently organised a presentation for employers to explain the new assessment procedures and the implications for the college and for employers.

Foundation for work

Grade 4

27. CNWL has 24 trainees following government-funded foundation for work programmes. In September 1999, the college extended its provision for young people to include the Life Skills option of the Learning Gateway. Nineteen young people are on a Life Skills programme. The programme is designed for young people, aged 16 to 17, who are unsure about their employment choices or future training and would benefit from additional support to develop their social and key skills. The Life Skills programme provides a series of vocational sample courses and a programme of personal development for a minimum of 16 hours a week. Trainees may remain on the programme for up to 12 weeks. Vocational sample courses are provided in construction, motor vehicle engineering and information technology. The personal development workshops include sessions on the preparation of curricula vitae, presentation skills, communication skills and interview techniques. The college offers a combined programme of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and computer training within the full-time education and training option of the New Deal for young people between 18 and 24 whose first language is not English. Five trainees are following this option.

28. Young people participating in the Life Skills programme are referred to the college by their personal advisor in the careers service. Personal advisors are responsible for agreeing on an individual development plan with the young person entering the Learning Gateway. Trainees referred to the college have an initial interview during which their individual development plan is discussed and the options available within the Life Skills programme are explained. Trainees receive an induction to the programme and have a second interview during which staff work with them to produce an action plan which builds on the activities outlined in the individual development plan. Trainees' progress is reviewed on a weekly or fortnightly basis, according to need.

29. The self-assessment report identified strengths and weaknesses in the programme, which are beyond the scope of the inspection. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ high levels of supervision and guidance
- ◆ well-structured induction

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poorly planned training
- ◆ poor recording of training activities
- ◆ some poor attendance and punctuality

30. Staff provide a high level of individual support to trainees and are sensitive to their needs and difficulties. They work hard to provide a supportive working environment in which trainees feel sufficiently confident and motivated to develop skills which they have not acquired during their school careers.

31. Activities are conducted in groups which are small enough to ensure that trainees receive individual attention and instruction. During the first two weeks they are on the Life Skills programme, trainees' progress is reviewed at the end of each week. Most trainees continue to have reviews at least once a fortnight thereafter. At the progress reviews, the opportunity is taken to discuss any financial and personal problems that may be creating barriers to participation in the training programme and also to address problems with timekeeping and behaviour. Staff have frequent informal contact with trainees when they are in college and contact trainees promptly by telephone in the case of unauthorised absence. They encourage trainees to identify job aspirations and provide opportunities to develop their interests during their training sessions in the college.

32. Trainees receive a well-structured induction to their training programmes. The induction provides frequent opportunities for questions and discussion and includes a number of group activities which engage the participants' interest and encourage them to get to know each other. Simple ground rules, such as listening to each other without interruption and not using offensive language, are negotiated at the beginning of the session. The induction provides a clear explanation of the contents of the training programme, a group health and safety activity and equal opportunities exercises. The trainees all contribute to the discussions and the trainer checks frequently to ensure that they understand the information they are given. Trainees have good recall of the content of the session and a sound understanding of the topics they have covered. Induction also includes a self-assessment exercise which identifies previous experience, personal skills and qualities and any specific vocational interests the trainee may have. This information is used to help draw up the trainee's initial training action plan. Trainees also take an assessment in reading, writing and mathematics during the induction to determine whether they have any needs that require additional support.

33. Training is not planned effectively to ensure that it meets the individual needs of trainees. At the onset of the training programme, training is not provided promptly once vocational interests or additional learning needs have been identified. For example, trainees have encountered substantial delay in the start of the information technology sample course. They have been offered only occasional personal development workshop-sessions in the meantime. Trainees report that

these delays have caused disappointment, a loss of motivation and confusion about the overall structure of the training programme. The needs of trainees on Life Skills programmes joining motor vehicle sample courses are not being met effectively through the current arrangements. These arrangements have been agreed with the engineering faculty of the college. The sample course is provided to allow trainees to overcome barriers which some feel prevent them from progressing onto a level 2 NVQ programme. Trainees interested in motor vehicle courses join the practical workshop sessions of a full-time second-year NVQ level 2 programme. These trainees have not received an induction to the motor vehicle workshop and are not being provided with a structured programme of training appropriate for an initial sample course. They are not provided with logbooks and are, therefore, not encouraged to record the work done in the workshop.

34. Although there are schemes of work and sessional plans for elements of the Life Skills programme, there are no individual records of work kept by trainees to indicate what they have achieved in each session, or to indicate which elements of the scheme of work they have covered. There is no record of the personal-development activities undertaken by individual trainees and it is not clear what trainees have achieved. Not all training sessions have written plans and trainees do not have folders containing the work they have completed and the learning materials they use. Staff providing the vocational sample courses and additional learning support are not asked for written progress reports, either as comments in trainees' logs or as a contribution to trainees' progress reviews. As a result, trainees are uncertain of the progress they are making and the skills they need to develop further. Discussion about the trainee's progress during a review are based only on feedback from the trainee.

35. Staff recognise that poor punctuality is a problem within elements of the programme. This is not a feature across the entire programme. Attendance at the motor vehicle and plumbing sample courses is good. However, even where attendance is satisfactory, punctuality is poor. For example, two of the three trainees attending a motor vehicle sample session during the inspection arrived an hour late. In addition, the in-house sessions observed started more than half-an-hour late because of the late arrival of substantial numbers of trainees. Although this problem has been recognised there are, as yet, no consistent strategies for rectifying it. Staff do not adopt a common approach to recording lateness and passing that information to the Life Skills team. In the contract year 1999-2000, 60 per cent of trainees left the programme early and 40 per cent progressed to further training. In 2000-2001, 19 of the 24 trainees who joined the programme remain in training. Three trainees have progressed to other training programmes and two left early.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

36. Responsibility for equal opportunities lies at a senior level with the vice-principal for partnership and development. There is an equal opportunities sub-committee of the academic board which meets every three months and reports its findings to the academic board. A co-ordinator is responsible for the promotion of equal opportunities in the college. Across the college as a whole, six equal opportunities advisors give support to students, trainees and staff on harassment, discrimination and other areas involving equal opportunities. Responsibility for equal opportunities is clearly understood by the staff and is included in job descriptions. The college has a detailed and comprehensive equal opportunities policy, which is widely disseminated. The college charter, a copy of which is given to all trainees at induction, includes reference to the college's support for equality of opportunity for all. Handbooks for both staff and trainees contain relevant information, including details of the complaints and grievance procedures. Arrangements for equal opportunities meet the TECs' contractual requirements and those of legislation. The college is committed to the identification of, and provision of support for, those with special needs, including specialist assessment and appropriate equipment and facilities to meet the individual needs of trainees. Most areas of the college are accessible for trainees with mobility problems. Data are collected on the ethnic background of trainees, their gender and whether they have a disability. It is collated and analysed to produce statistics which also include consideration of retention and achievement. People from minority ethnic groups are well represented on the staff; 52 per cent come from a minority ethnic background.

37. The self-assessment report identified three strengths and two weaknesses. The inspection team agreed with two of the strengths and one weakness. The inspectors found additional strengths and weaknesses. The college failed to identify its responsibility for promoting equality of opportunity to employers. The grade awarded was lower than that identified in the self-assessment report.

GOOD PRACTICE

Following the findings of the Macpherson inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, the college is committed to the elimination of institutional racism and its root cause. The definition of institutional racism is now contained in the college's up-dated equal opportunities policy.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-written policies and procedures for use in the college
- ◆ multi-agency projects to improve recruitment of under-represented groups
- ◆ good promotion of equal opportunities

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no policies and procedures specific to work-based training
- ◆ equal opportunities not monitored in the workplace

38. Written policies and procedures give detailed and comprehensive guidance to staff and trainees, and are subject to continuous review and amendment. The equal opportunities policy is well written and includes reference to direct and indirect discrimination. The college has developed a range of policies and guidelines relating to harassment and disability. Policies and procedures are formally reviewed regularly. An equal opportunities operational plan is drawn up annually to drive improvements. All curriculum faculties and ET&E must ensure that equal opportunities are addressed in their annual operational plans.

39. Equal opportunities are promoted successfully throughout the college. Dedicated staff with a remit to promote equal opportunities are effectively deployed. Staff and trainees are able to recall the equality issues included in their induction programme and details of the policy. The equal opportunities co-ordinator has taken the lead in the production of an induction pack for the use of tutors which contains materials and clear guidelines relating to equal opportunities. Trainees are aware of the complaints procedure and are provided with sufficient information. . There is a breadth of training on issues relating to equality of opportunity. This includes training on women in manual trades and working with disaffected youth. Equal opportunities weeks, with guest speakers in attendance, are held annually. They include training on discrimination in the workplace and a talk from a member of staff from the low pay unit. Students' focus groups have been established which includes equality of opportunity on the agenda, although a work-based trainee has yet to be included as a member. These meet twice a year to discuss areas relating to equal opportunities, for example the production of the disability statement.

40. Across all programmes, 23 per cent of the current trainees are from minority ethnic groups which is substantially lower than the percentage in the population of Brent as a whole. However, the average number of young people from minority ethnic groups participating in training in construction and engineering over the last three years has increased from 13 per cent to 44 per cent. This is the result of the projects in which the college takes a leading role, including the BOSS initiative. The college has initiated a wide range of projects with the involvement of other agencies. These are targeted at community groups, including minority ethnic groups, women and those people living on deprived housing estates. One multi-agency-funded scheme initiated this summer drew over 700 young people to the college to take part in vocational taster programmes, fun days and basic and key skills development programmes. Over 20 per cent of the young people were committed to undertaking education or training at the college. At the time of inspection the exact number who took up places is unknown.

41. Policies and procedures for equal opportunities have been developed primarily for college-based training and are not specific to on-the-job training. Arrangements for ensuring equal opportunities within work placements and with employers are weak. Management control of equal opportunities at work is through signed employers' agreements. A requirement for adherence by employers to the college's

equal opportunities policy if they do not have their own is not explicit in these contracts. Agreements emphasise the employers' need to be aware of equal opportunities issues and their compliance with statutory requirements. Presently, the monitoring of employers' equal opportunities arrangements is insufficient and not rigorously and routinely carried out within a formal framework.

Trainee support

Grade 4

42. Trainees are referred to ET&E by employers, the careers service, by word of mouth or recruited through marketing activities. Prospective trainees are interviewed and given details of the courses of training available. All required paperwork is completed and trainees take an initial assessment of their basic skills. Trainees with ET&E have access to a wide range of specialist learning support and counselling services through the college. The TECs' contracts require that trainees on foundation for work, traineeships and apprenticeships are reviewed every 12 weeks. Unemployed trainees are referred to an employment placement officer who identifies suitable job opportunities. All trainees have an induction.

43. The supporting text in the self-assessment report gave information on ET&E's plans to address weakness in initial assessment, however, this was not identified as a key weakness. The text also gave information on pastoral support available to trainees and this information was translated into the two strengths and one weakness. The self-assessment report failed to identify any of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the inspectors. The grade awarded by inspectors was lower than that proposed in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good personal development opportunities
- ◆ innovative approach to individual pastoral support

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor initial assessment practice
- ◆ additional support not always offered
- ◆ extremely poor individual training plans
- ◆ insufficient and ineffective reviews for most trainees

POOR PRACTICE

The father of one trainee is paying for additional tuition in mathematics because no referral for additional support has been made.

44. Trainees are actively encouraged to attend additional training sessions designed to assist them in developing personal skills such as effective communications, motivation and study skills. Many of the sessions are designed to give practical information and support to enable trainees to prepare for, and find employment. The sessions are well planned with clear aims and objectives. The session on job search covers a range of topics from how the individual should market and present themselves to prospective employers, completion of

POOR PRACTICE

There are missed opportunities to provide English language support to those trainees who need to develop their language skills in order to access training and employment. This need has been confirmed in interviews and assessments conducted within the college. Requests for a referral to the learning support unit have been made. However, some of these trainees have completed half of the Life Skills programme without receiving any English language tuition. ESOL trainees report difficulties in understanding instructions and concern that their poor language skills will continue to be a barrier to further training and to employment.

application forms and help and advice on interview techniques. Between July and October there were in excess of 200 individual attendances at the sessions. Trainees complete an evaluation at the end of each session which is analysed and used to improve them where necessary.

45. The college works closely with local agencies to ensure a cohesive multi-agency approach to dealing with trainees who have complex barriers to learning. Youth offending officers, careers advisors and college advisors liaise to ensure that appointments made for young people to meet their support workers do not conflict with college course requirements. Young people with specific problems are introduced to experts who can advise and guide them, for example community mental health workers, councillors, housing support officers and social workers. The families of trainees are also encouraged to become involved in helping to resolve issues which affect training and development. College staff will interview and start trainees on courses at short notice to ensure that the initial enthusiasm for training is not lost by the trainee having to wait several weeks to commence a course of training.

46. Initial assessment is carried out after the trainee has been accepted onto a programme. Initial assessment is not used to inform the decision on which course is most suitable for the trainee. The results of initial assessment are not used systematically to ensure additional support is provided where it is required. National trainees and modern apprentices complete an assessment on application of number and communication at level 2 which requires a pass mark of 60 per cent to ensure that they can complete the key skills element of their traineeship or apprenticeship programme. The majority of trainees score less than 60 per cent, many achieving scores well below 40 per cent. The assessments and results remain in the trainees' files and trainees are not referred for additional support.

47. As a result of their initial interview, trainees on programmes of 'other training' are often asked to complete assessments in key skills at level 1 to determine if they require any additional support. Some trainees have their support needs identified on completion of the initial action plan. ET&E staff refer trainees to the learning support unit. The referral process is often slow, taking between one and six months to be made, by which time trainees have started their training or have been enrolled for specific qualifications and programmes of learning. Little information on the trainees is passed to the learning support unit. Learning support staff keep college staff informed when trainees do not turn up for specific assessments. When the learning support team have completed their assessment of the trainee a copy is sent to ET&E. During their time with the learning support unit, details of trainees' progress, attendance or issues of concern are not kept by the ET&E to help them support the trainees.

48. Key information is often omitted from training plans. Details of qualifications gained at school or on other training courses are not routinely entered. On some training plans qualification details are incorrect. Details of previous or current work experience are not routinely recorded. Prior learning, experience and qualifications are not used to inform the training. The results of assessments

POOR PRACTICE

Three month after informing ET&E that he suffered from dyslexia and received additional support as school, a trainee had not been referred for additional support.

recorded on the training plan are often ignored. The training plan consists of the qualification title and number and a list of NVQ units all of which have the same target date for achievement, which is the date on which the trainee is due to complete the course. Dates for planned reviews are not always recorded and when they are, the actual review dates are not recorded. Training plans do not record any additional courses which the trainee undertakes either on- or off-the-job. Trainees' attendance at off-the-job training, tutors' comments on progress or issues of concern are not recorded on trainees' files. No details of progress towards completion of off-the-job training are recorded. Trainees' attendance at off-the-job training or at the work place is not recorded. If trainees move from one programme to another it is not recorded on the training plan.

49. Inadequate up-to-date information is maintained about trainees' progress to ensure that reviews are effective. Information on attendance at the workplace, occasional feedback from tutors, attendance at additional courses and details on additional support are all maintained in different places. Work-based trainees who attend college on a day release basis receive few progress reviews by ET&E and some trainees have never been reviewed. Workplace reviews, when they take place, concentrate on health and safety issues and only minimal information is recorded about trainees' progress. Review forms are sometimes posted to the workplace for completion by the employer but few of them are returned and maintained in trainees' files. Some workplace trainees have never had a review despite being on the programme for over a year. A trainee who started his apprenticeship in November 1997 has only had three reviews. Trainees on programmes which require attendance at college on several days a week are reviewed frequently during the first few weeks and thereafter monthly. No specific targets are set during reviews, nor are trainees given a copy of the documentation that results. Employers are not involved in reviews.

Management of training

Grade 4

50. CNWL has established a discrete division within the organisation, ET&E, to manage its TEC-funded work-based training contracts. ET&E also manages the New Deal full-time education & training option and other initiatives supported by European funding. There is a divisional manager who reports to one of the college's vice-principals who has ultimate management responsibility. These key personnel represent ET&E at various levels of the college's management, sitting on several committees and working groups. There are 12.5 full-time staff in the ET&E team, some of whom are on temporary contracts of employment. Since the vice-principal with the specific task of developing ET&E was appointed 18 months ago, the staffing structure has undergone significant change. There are more personnel than before, and their roles and responsibilities have changed in line with the strategic aims of the college and the division. Managers have focused on developing the New Deal and on establishing an entry level scheme to attract trainees from minority groups within the local community into the construction and engineering industries. There are two subcontract agreements. One is with another college for some motor vehicle trainees and the other is with a private

training provider for computing that supports the New Deal clients. The college has a specific business plan for ET&E. There are written procedures for the recruitment of staff, induction, appraisal and their professional development. Managers monitor the TECs' contractual targets through monthly budget meetings.

51. The self-assessment report proposed two strengths which inspectors considered to be insufficiently established to impact on the management of training. It also proposed two weaknesses, one of which inspectors agreed with. The self-assessment report did not accurately identify the key issues in management of training and inspectors awarded a lower grade than suggested by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well structured and diverse staff development

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poorly managed training programmes
- ◆ roles and responsibilities unclear
- ◆ ineffective management information system

GOOD PRACTICE

ET&E has subcontracted a new company to deliver computer training for New Deal clients. It has entered into a written agreement with the subcontractor that stipulates the standard of service required. This contract is reviewed frequently. Action plans are agreed with the subcontractor to improve performance. ET&E has encouraged the subcontractor to use 'Raising the Standard' to inform its quality assurance procedures. The subcontractor has been enthusiastic about achieving high standards and is providing training of good quality..

52. ET&E has a staff development plan, updated annually, which demonstrates clear links to the college's strategic objectives and the division's operational plan. The division has planned an effective course of action to prepare staff for the forthcoming changes in the training and assessment qualifications of persons involved in work-based training. The college holds four well planned days of staff development each year which all members of staff attend. This year's theme for one day's training across the college has been institutional racism. Staff attend many internal and external training events that are highly relevant to their jobs. Training covers a broad range of topics including, for example, racial harassment, developing skills in information technology, identifying learning needs and developing key skills. Information on training opportunities is published in bulletins circulated regularly to all staff who take good advantage of them. All personnel are encouraged to join any college course they wish, at no cost to themselves, to develop either their professional or personal skills.

53. ET&E has introduced a range of new initiatives that are aimed at improving and strengthening the way the college manages work-based training. Staffing levels and deployment have been improved. Better management systems have been introduced. The management strategy has been to concentrate on the New Deal and other training programmes, rather than the apprenticeship training, as the starting point for improvement. This strategy has reaped some successes. However, the apprenticeship programmes are not well managed. There are major problems within the whole training process. The college provides off-the-job training mainly through the attendance of trainees at its day-release courses. ET&E staff have little knowledge or influence over this training. There is little beneficial liaison between

ET&E's staff, curriculum teaching staff and employers. There is no co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. There is inadequate work-based assessment. No one has a clear overview about trainees' progress. ET&E staff meetings are casual or held at irregular intervals. Some curriculum teaching staff do not fully understand the work-based training programme. There are no service level agreements between ET&E's management and the college faculties to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and that service standards are understood. Trainees get good training when they visit the college but receive a poorly managed and largely ineffective learning experience when they return to work.

54. The college has recently invested in new software to process data on trainees' retention and achievement. The management information system is not working efficiently at the present time and does not contain sufficient data to provide an accurate analysis of performance. Manual records have not been used to measure retention and achievement in the past. Managers have no hard facts about performance. Data are not used to inform management decisions or to set targets that drive improved performance.

Quality assurance

Grade 4

55. The college has a quality assurance system that is supported by detailed written procedures. ET&E manages the work-based training contracts and has additional informal quality assurance arrangements. The college aims to improve its performance through an annual structured programme of self-assessment. The results of self-assessment are used to set divisional targets and strategic objectives. ET&E has a set of quality standards and measurable targets that are determined by all the divisional staff during an annual development day.

56. The college identified one strength and one weakness for quality assurance in the self-assessment report. The inspectors agreed with the strength. The proposed weakness was just one aspect of much broader and more important issues about quality assurance. The inspectors found significant weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than the grade proposed in the self-assessment report.

GOOD PRACTICE

One trainer developed learning materials and a session plan for a new course. The materials were reviewed as part of the quality assurance arrangements to check for accuracy, currency and relevance. The divisional manager then used the session plan and resources to actually deliver the training to a group of trainees. It was only after the manager was satisfied that the course content and design were appropriate and worked well that it was finally approved.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good arrangements to quality assure off-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate quality assurance arrangements
- ◆ poor use of key performance indicators
- ◆ quality assurance arrangements not fully co-ordinated
- ◆ insufficient critical analysis in self-assessment process

57. The college has comprehensive and effective arrangements to improve the trainees' experience while they are on the college's premises. There are systematic opportunities for trainees, employers, staff and other stakeholders to offer their views on the college's performance, through evaluation questionnaires and focus groups. Findings are analysed and appropriate action is taken. The college's staff are fully engaged in the organisation's self-assessment process. There is a college charter that explains what levels of service should be provided. Teaching sessions are systematically observed and graded according to the quality of the learning experience. The system is supported by clearly written procedures and managed by working parties that address issues and implement any necessary changes. There is a programme of internal audit. The system has produced some overall improvements in retention and achievement in the college as a whole.

58. The college's quality assurance system does not give adequate coverage to the trainees' experiences in the workplace. Feedback forms contain no questions to trainees about their working environment. College staff have no knowledge of the quality of work-based training given by employers and there are no arrangements to monitor or measure this aspect of the programme. Managers have been making assumptions that trainees in the workplace are receiving a satisfactory experience whereas, in reality, this is not the case in all instances. Each division within the college has its own set of targets. The targets for ET&E are aimed principally at contract compliance rather than improved performance. Retention and achievement data have not been analysed and there are no performance indicators to drive improvement in this important area. ET&E has started to develop additional quality assurance arrangements that fall outside the scope of the main college system. There are few links between these arrangements and the main quality assurance system. In some cases, there are duplicated arrangements that are running independently of each other, such as feedback questionnaires and complaints procedures. In other cases there are arrangements that are not effectively informing both the college and the ET&E managers. For example, the college system includes internal and external verification of trainees' and assessors' work. ET&E managers do not systematically see this vital data about the quality of the assessment practice. In another example, all college lessons are observed as a feature of the quality assurance system. However, training sessions delivered by ET&E staff are not observed.

59. The self-assessment report was largely inaccurate. Inspectors agreed with only a few of the judgements made by the college as a result of their self-assessment process. Most of the self-assessed grades were unrealistic. Some of the key weaknesses were commented on in the main body of the report but were not reflected in the final judgements. Managers were aware of many of the weaknesses that were found by inspectors, but these were not included in the self-assessment report. Overall, the self-assessment process has not been successful in identifying the major strengths and weaknesses of this organisation, and has been largely ineffective at driving improvement.