



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT NOVEMBER 2000

Arthur Rank Training

SUMMARY

Arthur Rank Training provides good training in business administration and satisfactory foundation for work training but training in agriculture, construction and engineering is less than satisfactory. Trainees receive good on-the-job training and work-placement providers are very supportive. Overall retention and achievement rates are low. Assessment practices are weak and are inadequately internally verified. There is a good range of initiatives to attract disadvantaged young people into training. The induction programme is effective. Trainees are provided with good additional learning support and pastoral support. Training plans are not individualised and trainees' progress reviews are mostly ineffective. There are good internal and external communications. Management information is systematically collected and effectively used. Subcontractors are ineffectively managed and there is insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the job training. The quality assurance system is not yet effective.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Agriculture	4
Construction	4
Engineering	4
Business administration	2
Foundation for work	3

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	2
Trainee support	3
Management of training	4
Quality assurance	4

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ very supportive work-placement providers
- ◆ good on-the-job training
- ◆ good range of initiatives to attract disadvantaged young people
- ◆ effective induction programme
- ◆ good additional learning support and pastoral support
- ◆ good internal and external communications
- ◆ good use of management information

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates
- ◆ weak assessment practices
- ◆ failure to individualise training plans
- ◆ ineffective progress reviews
- ◆ ineffective co-ordination of on- and off-the job training
- ◆ weak management of subcontractors
- ◆ inadequate internal verification
- ◆ underdeveloped quality assurance arrangements

INTRODUCTION

1. Arthur Rank Training is based at the National Agriculture Centre (NAC) show ground at Stoneleigh in Warwickshire. It was established in 1981 and is an autonomous part of the Arthur Rank Centre, which was established in 1972 by the Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE) and the Rank Foundation. The purpose of Arthur Rank Training is to provide vocational and personal development training for young people who, for various reasons, are socially or educationally disadvantaged. Personal development of the individual is fundamental to Arthur Rank Training and the organisation seeks to develop young people's personal and social skills in order to enable them to succeed in work and life.

2. Arthur Rank Training contracts with Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise (CCTE) to provide work-based training for trainees with special training needs. There are 106 trainees and the table below shows their distribution across the various occupational areas. Most trainees are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 1 and all are endorsed by the careers service as requiring additional learning support. There are 20 full- and part-time staff. Off-the-job training takes place at the Arthur Rank Training centre and at other shared locations on the show ground. Some training and assessment is subcontracted to self-employed tutors and local further education colleges. Those trainees who progress to NVQs at level 2 attend further education colleges in Coventry for their off-the-job training. Trainees receive their on-the-job training and work experience at placements located around Coventry and Warwickshire. Use is made of the wide variety of other organisations which share the site to provide some work-experience placements and training projects.

3. In 1999, the proportion of 16 year olds in Coventry and Warwickshire staying on in full-time education was high, at 67.6 per cent. Of those leaving full-time education, 20.8 per cent are currently involved with work-based training. The proportion of school leavers gaining five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 39.1 per cent in Coventry and 47.1 per cent in Warwickshire, compared with a national average of 47.9 per cent. In March 2000, people from minority ethnic groups made up 11.9 per cent of Coventry's population and 3.4 per cent of Warwickshire's population. The combined population of Coventry and Warwickshire is approximately 820,000.

4. The unemployment rate is 3.9 per cent in Coventry and 2 per cent in Warwickshire, compared with a national average 4.2 per cent. It is forecast that employment rates in the region will remain stable and that there will be an increasing number of jobs in wholesaling and retail distribution, business, education and health services. Motor vehicle and component manufacturing constitutes a declining part of the local economy, but there remains a need for training in this area as existing workers change jobs, retire or move into management positions. Coventry and parts of Warwickshire suffer high levels of social exclusion and deprivation such as high unemployment, low educational

attainment and poor housing. Coventry is fortieth in the 1998 index of local deprivation. North Warwickshire and Nuneaton are ranked at 114 and 199 respectively. Transport links within the urban areas of Coventry and Warwickshire are generally good.

Number of trainees involved with each occupational area

Occupational Area	Advanced modern apprentice	Foundation modern apprentice	Other training programmes
Agriculture			9
Construction		1	46
Engineering			29
Business administration			12
Media & design			3
Foundation for work			7
Total	0	1	106

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. Arthur Rank Training produced its first self-assessment report in 1998. The current self-assessment report is its third. It is based on: an analysis of information gained from questionnaire responses from trainees, employers and parents; group and one-to-one discussions; statistical data; and feedback from the CCTE, schools and the careers service. Inspectors considered many of the aspects of provision described as strengths in the self-assessment report as no more than normal practice. The extent of poor retention and underachievement was not fully acknowledged. Three of the occupational area grades and three of the generic area grades awarded by inspectors were lower than those given by Arthur Rank Training.

6. Seven inspectors spent 28 days at Arthur Rank Training during November 2000. This is an unusually high ratio of inspectors to trainees and reflects the number of occupational areas inspected. In agriculture and foundation for work, the number of trainees was lower than normal at the time of inspection. Inspectors conducted 46 interviews with trainees. They visited the premises of 29 work-placement providers and interviewed 26 workplace supervisors. Forty-two interviews took place with staff at Arthur Rank Training. Inspectors looked at trainees' portfolios and files, the organisation's policies and procedures, and a wide range of other paperwork. Inspectors observed instruction sessions and reviews of trainees' progress and awarded grades as shown in the table below.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Agriculture		1	1			2
Construction			3			3
Engineering			1	1		2
Business administration	2	1	1			4
Foundation for work		1		1		2
Total	2	3	6	2	0	13

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Agriculture

Grade 4

7. All nine trainees in this occupational area are following horticultural programmes. Normally there are 15 trainees. Eight trainees are working towards NVQ at level 1 in amenity horticulture. One is working towards the decorative horticulture option of NVQ at level 2 in amenity horticulture. Two trainees are employed. Placements include local golf courses, landscape contractors and garden

maintenance businesses. Two trainees without work placements attend the Arthur Rank Training centre for four days each week. Eight of the nine trainees are men. Most trainees are referred to Arthur Rank Training by the careers service.

8. The training programmes last up to two years. Most of the NVQ level 1 training is carried out off the job at the Arthur Rank Centre. Off-the-job training for NVQ at level 2 in horticulture is subcontracted to a local specialist college. The range of off-the-job training activities includes practical skills development, practical demonstrations and portfolio-building. Trainees' vocational knowledge is developed using questionnaires, workbooks and plant identification sheets. Some assessment is done on the job but most takes place at Arthur Rank Training. Internal verification is subcontracted to a local further education college.

9. The training centre has recently received approval from the awarding body to provide training and assessment in amenity horticulture at NVQ level 1. The trainer/assessor holds assessors' qualifications. The training resources include plots for project work, hand tools, small machinery and a dedicated classroom. The centre also has access to the estate. This provides a variety of training opportunities in landscape contracting and gives trainees commercial experience. All trainees undertake a two-week induction at the training centre with a follow-up in their workplace.

10. Inspectors judged that the self-assessment report was insufficiently self-critical. Inspectors agreed with the good trainee support and with the links with employers. It failed to identify the weaknesses identified by inspectors. The grade awarded by inspectors was lower than that in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ very supportive work-placement providers
- ◆ good range of on-the-job work activities
- ◆ high priority given to health and safety

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates
- ◆ inadequate assessment and internal verification practices

11. Workplace supervisors are enthusiastic and keen to help trainees. Trainees are made to feel part of the company and value their work experience, which includes a wide range of practical activities. However, many opportunities for trainees to gather work-based evidence are missed. A good range of off-the-job practical activities is offered at the NAC. These activities are carried out in a realistic commercial landscaping environment.

12. Training in health and safety is given a high priority during induction and is reinforced throughout the training programme at the Arthur Rank Centre and

during workplace monitoring visits. As a result, the trainees have a high level of health and safety awareness in this high-risk occupational area.

13. Achievement and retention rates have been poor for the past three years. In 1997-98, 81 per cent of trainees left the programme without achieving the targets in their individual learning plans. The figure was 58 per cent in 1998-99 and at least 82 per cent in 1999-2000. In 1999-2000, 27 per cent of trainees achieved qualifications in wordpower and numberpower. This figure was 59 per cent in 1998-99 and 75 per cent in 1997-98. Progression to employment and further education has increased from 37 per cent in 1997-98 to 55 per cent in 1999-2000.

14. The assessment practices lack rigour. There is some planning of assessments, but the plans are not communicated effectively to trainees and workplace supervisors. Initial assessment of occupational skills is not carried out. There is little accreditation of prior learning. Some trainees had prior experience of amenity horticulture which was not taken into account by Arthur Rank Training. A range of assessment methods is used to test trainees' vocational knowledge. Most assessment is done during off-the-job training. Opportunities for trainees to collect evidence on the job are missed. Most employers have a poor understanding of the NVQ requirements. A recently appointed trainer/assessor is developing new strategies to improve assessment and evidence gathering.

15. Internal verification is not done systematically and the outcomes are not recorded clearly. The internal verification process does not include routine observations of trainees undertaking practical activities.

Construction

Grade 4

16. There is one foundation modern apprentice in bricklaying and 46 trainees on a range of other work-based training programmes. All the trainees are men. There are 20 trainees working towards building craft NVQs at level 1, 19 on wood occupations at level 1, three on bricklaying at level 2, one on wood occupations at level 2 and three on plumbing at level 2.

17. Off-the-job training, assessment and verification for the NVQs at level 2 are subcontracted to three local colleges of further education. Level 1 off-the-job training and assessment are undertaken by Arthur Rank Training's tutors. The internal verification has very recently been subcontracted to a local further education college. One tutor at the training centre was recruited from industry nine months ago and recently achieved an assessors' qualification. He is registered to assess all the NVQs offered at the centre. Two tutors have recently been recruited from industry and were being inducted into the organisation at the time of the inspection.

18. Potential trainees are referred by the careers service. The level 2 NVQ trainees are employed. During the two-week induction, new trainees get a general introduction to the construction industry, make a start on developing their tool skills and are prepared for work placements. There is a strong emphasis on team

building, working with others and health and safety. Trainees start work experience after the induction period and attend the centre for one day each week for off-the-job training. Level 2 trainees attend college on a day-release basis.

19. Many of the features identified as strengths in the self-assessment report were considered by inspectors to be more appropriate to the generic areas or to be no more than normal practice. The report did not identify the poor retention and achievement rates or the poor off-the-job training resources as weaknesses. The inspection grade is lower than that in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ very supportive work-placement providers
- ◆ good on-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ missed opportunities for collecting work-based evidence
- ◆ inadequate off-the-job training resources
- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates

20. Arthur Rank Training's staff work hard to find good work placements and to develop good working relationships with the work-placement providers. When problems arise, such as poor timekeeping by trainees, they respond quickly and resolve the issue effectively. As a result of these good working relationships, the work-placement providers are very supportive of the trainees. Workplace supervisors allocate appropriate tasks to trainees and recognise the importance of making time available for on-the-job training within the constraints of the work schedule. Trainees benefit from the opportunities to develop their skills in real work situations.

21. Trainees are issued with on-site record books in which they record the tasks they have done. These are countersigned by their supervisors. The language used in the record books is difficult for the trainees and the workplace supervisors to understand. The books are often completed incorrectly and do not record the full range of the trainees' work experience. There is no workplace assessment. Trainees demonstrate their skills and knowledge in simulated work environments at college rather than being assessed on the job.

22. One of the three subcontracting colleges was visited by inspectors. It had satisfactory facilities and resources. There is insufficient space, tools and equipment in the two workshops at Arthur Rank Training. For example, the workshop used for brickwork can accommodate only six trainees and only two trainees at a time can work on roofing or plastering activities. The external verifier has recommended that the number of trainees should be restricted or the physical resources improved. The newly appointed internal verifier has noted that the number of trainees registered exceeds the available facilities and resources. The

construction classroom is also poorly resourced. There is no overhead projector and there are no models or samples for use as training aids. The trainees receive little teaching from tutors. To gain background knowledge they rely on answering self-test questions in workpacks. The workpacks are retained in the classroom and can only be used during timetabled classroom sessions. Trainees are unable to use them for private study or for reference. There are no textbooks for trainees to take away and very few reference books. The inadequate resources are impeding the progress of trainees and reducing their motivation.

23. Retention and achievement rates are poor. In 1997-98, 32 trainees started on training programmes but only three achieved the targets in their individual training plans. Two gained an NVQ at level 1, one progressed into further education and 13 secured employment. In 1998-99, 42 trainees started on programmes. Only four completed their programmes. Three gained an NVQ at level 1 and one an NVQ at level 3. Six of the trainees progressed into further education, nine secured employment, and five are still in training. Of the 47 trainees who started in 1999-2000 none have completed their individual training plans and only 16 are still in training. The average time spent by trainees on training programmes is over 91 weeks.

Engineering

Grade 4

24. Arthur Rank Training has 29 trainees working towards motor vehicle NVQs at levels 1 and 2. There are 19 trainees working towards vehicle maintenance service replacement level 1 NVQs, nine trainees working towards vehicle fitting level 1 NVQs and two trainees working towards vehicle fitting level 2 NVQs. Most trainees attend the Arthur Rank Centre one day each week or each fortnight. Some trainees with additional learning support needs attend more frequently. The remaining time is spent gaining work experience. One trainee is employed at a tyre and exhaust workshop, and the remaining trainees have work placements with one of 28 employers. These are either small general-purpose motor vehicle workshops or tyre and exhaust-fitting organisations. There are two full-time and one part-time motor vehicle trainers. Two have training, assessors' and verifiers' qualifications. One recently appointed member of staff is working towards the NVQ assessors' qualification.

25. Trainees are assessed either in the training centre's workshop or at their work placement, by the trainers employed by Arthur Rank Training. Either one of the two qualified trainers internally verifies trainees' portfolios of evidence. Trainees attend a two-week induction programme before starting their NVQ programme. All trainees undergo an initial assessment to identify whether they need additional learning support. Most trainees receive such support. Trainees' progress is formally reviewed every 12 weeks.

26. Many of the features described in the self-assessment report as strengths were judged by inspectors to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified additional weaknesses and awarded a grade which was lower than that given by Arthur Rank Training.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good training towards additional qualifications
- ◆ effective workplace observations

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates
- ◆ inadequate assessment and internal verification practices

27. The three motor vehicle trainers/assessors carry out regular workplace visits and observe work being carried out by the trainees. This workplace observation is well recorded and reinforces the workplace supervisors' witness testimony of the trainees' competence. Trainees complete a job card which is placed in their portfolio of evidence along with the observation record. Trainees monitor their progress towards achieving the NVQ using two simple monitoring sheets, which they keep in their portfolios. One sheet covers the four core units of the NVQ, which are generally completed first. The other covers the three occupational units, which take longer to achieve. Relationships between the trainers, trainees and work-placement providers are good. Any problems are addressed quickly. If a work placement cannot provide the required range of work experience, the training centre's motor vehicle workshop is used. Staff, tenants of the NAC, and external customers, book their cars into the training centre for service and repair. This arrangement enables trainees to broaden their experience and knowledge of vehicle technology. However, some vehicles being worked on during the inspection were older than five years, which is the upper limit recommended for assessment purposes by the motor industry's national training organisation. The training centre's motor vehicle workshop is adequately equipped to provide training at NVQ level 1. The training centre has recently been accredited for the revised vehicle-fitting programme at levels 1 and 2. Some minor upgrading of equipment will be required. The motor vehicle training workshop is located some distance from the main training centre's headquarters on the show ground. There are two classrooms in which vehicle technology is taught.

28. Trainees have the opportunity to take additional qualifications alongside the NVQ programme. Courses in vehicle systems, safety and information technology supplement the knowledge and skills gained on the NVQ programmes. Trainees make good use of this additional learning, for example by word processing their technical reports. Some trainees who do not complete a motor vehicle NVQ nevertheless achieve one or more of these supplementary awards.

29. The regular visits by trainers to observe trainees at work are also used to carry out NVQ assessments. This assessment practice is not in keeping with NVQ guidelines. There is no action-planning and no confirmation that the candidate is ready for assessment and fully understands the assessment process and the appeals procedure. There is no record of the questions asked, the trainees' responses or the assessment decision reached. The internal verification process was also poor. In

most cases internal verification was not carried out until all the NVQ units had been assessed. There was no properly planned programme of internal verification.

30. Despite the fact that trainees spend longer than normal on the training programmes, and that most of them receive additional learning support, completion rates are poor. The average number of weeks spent on the programme was 95 for the 1997-98 intake, 84 for the 1998-99 intake, and 65 for the 1999-2000 intake. The percentages achieving their target qualification for each of these intakes was 33 per cent, 31 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. Of the last 42 leavers, 21 moved into employment or further education.

Grade 2

Business administration

31. Arthur Rank Training provides administration and information technology training for 12 trainees. Four trainees are working towards NVQs at level 1 and one towards an NVQ at level 2 in information technology. Five trainees are working towards the administration NVQ at level 1 and two towards level 2. Arthur Rank Training uses a subcontractor to provide some assessment and training in this occupational area. One assessor carries out centre-based assessment and reviews, and provides practical and theoretical training. Another assesses level 2 administration and information technology in the workplace. Staff employed by the subcontractor carry out internal verification. All staff have relevant assessment and occupational qualifications and experience. Most trainees are men, which reflects the referrals from the careers service. Initial training is carried out at the Arthur Rank Centre. Once on work placements, trainees continue to attend the training centre for one day each week. They either spend the whole day working in the vocational area, or half a day on vocational skills and half a day on basic skills.

32. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report but considered that some strengths were more appropriate to the generic areas and that some of the weaknesses had been overstated. They awarded a higher grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good assessment practice
- ◆ wide variety of good work placements
- ◆ effective progress reviews
- ◆ good achievement and progression rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient off-the-job training resources

33. Most trainees join the training programme in September. They are given clear instruction booklets to help them learn basic computer techniques. Group training sessions take place to cover an explanation of the NVQ process, and core skills such as telephone work. One-to-one coaching is provided to fill any gaps in learning.

34. Assessment practice is good. Assessment begins in the training centre as trainees carry out work for members of staff. This helps to set standards and introduce the idea of deadlines. Workplace visits by the assessor take place every two weeks for administration trainees and once a month for information technology trainees. Assessment plans specify what will be observed and assessed in the workplace. During observations, trainees are questioned to test their background knowledge. This verbal questioning ensures that trainees with poor writing skills are not unduly disadvantaged. Clear feedback is given to trainees at the end of an assessment. They are told whether they have achieved the required standard and if not they are given guidance on how to improve. Trainees are set clear targets which are recorded in a simple 'to do' system in their folders. Recording of evidence in logbooks is completed by the assessor for trainees at level 1. All trainees have a good idea of how many units they have to complete. Trainees at level 2 are encouraged to complete their own logbooks.

35. There is a wide variety of good work placements. Each provides appropriate learning opportunities. Some of the trainees are employed. Those who are on work placements are treated as employees, and are involved in company meetings and personal development schemes. One has his name on the staff membership board at the entrance to the building. Many of the placements have been used for several years and the employers understand the NVQ requirements and the assessment process. Some of the newer employers were not so clear about their role. All employers value the NVQ training and qualification. Most workplace supervisors are actively involved in the training. Not all are aware of the exact targets set for the trainees, as they are not given a copy of the relevant document.

36. The assessor carries out effective three-monthly progress reviews. In preparation for these progress reviews, trainees judge their progress in work-related skills on a scale from one to five. Workplace supervisors carry out the same exercise and the assessor discusses the two profiles during progress reviews. Action plans are devised to address areas of weakness. Achievable targets are set at the end of these progress reviews.

37. Achievement rates are good for those trainees who remain on the programme. In 1999-2000, 18 out of 24 trainees on the programme gained at least one NVQ, including four who gained awards in both information technology and administration. Nineteen of the qualifications were at level 2. Progression from the course is satisfactory. In 1998-99, 64 per cent of the trainees went into employment; in 1999-2000, 24 per cent went into employment and 25 per cent went on to further training in colleges. The retention rate over the past four years has varied between 50 per cent and 70 per cent. Twenty-four trainees started in

1999-2000 and the retention rate for this group was only 50 per cent. Many trainees had the wrong idea of what the information technology course involved and were unaware that they would also be doing administration. This was largely as a result of inadequate careers advice.

38. Off-the-job training resources are inadequate. The subcontractor is at the training centre for two days each week and visits workplaces two days each week. Trainees who are not on work placements spend all their time at the training centre but are not given structured programmes of work for the times when the staff are away. Some administrative tasks are given to the trainees by other training staff. There is no model office and all training activities are carried out in the training room. Furniture in this room is in a poor state and it does not provide a professional environment. When the subcontractor is on holiday, trainees who would normally come into the training centre for one day each week remain in their work placements, or are given work to do at home.

Grade 3

Foundation for work

39. Arthur Rank Training currently has seven foundation for work trainees. This number is unusually low and a further four people were due to start during the week of the inspection. During the period since April 2000, 27 trainees have started the programme. All the trainees are attending life skills training, a programme funded by the CCTE as part of the Learning Gateway. The programme is designed to help young people who find it difficult to obtain places on other training programmes. Many have no GCSEs or low grades; some lack basic skills; some have been excluded from school; some come from homes which do not encourage learning. A minority of trainees have a history of offending or drug or alcohol misuse. Life skills training aims to provide an entry route to training by helping trainees to identify and begin to overcome barriers to training and make a realistic choice of career.

40. The careers service refers trainees onto the programme after a period of assessment. After an induction and some further assessment, trainees begin a programme which lasts up to 16 weeks. The training includes project work at Arthur Rank Training, work tasters within various occupational areas, work placements with employers, and training in literacy, numeracy, information technology and communication. The programme also includes talks by visiting speakers such as the local police, prison service and drugs team, visits to local employers and a personal development programme. The main outcomes of the programme are progression to further training, education or employment.

41. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but judged them to be part of more significant strengths and weaknesses. They agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ some good training techniques
- ◆ good progression rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ failure to meet needs of all trainees
- ◆ inadequate training resources
- ◆ inadequate initial assessment

42. Staff use some good training techniques to develop trainees' enthusiasm and maintain their interest. During teaching sessions, staff adopt a firm but friendly manner and teaching style, use frequent questioning, maintain eye contact and challenge trainees' attitudes and assumptions. They make good use of the resources available to them to provide variety and interest. For example, they have developed on-site community projects such as building an assault course. They also invite guest speakers and arrange visits and social events. All staff are sensitive to the needs of trainees and work hard to balance the need to set and maintain standards of behaviour against the risk of alienating trainees by unrealistic expectations. Trainees confirm that they find staff easy to approach and helpful. They appreciate being treated as adults.

43. Trainees have the opportunity to try practical work in different occupational areas, both at the training centre and in work placements. The work tasters with employers are particularly helpful and some trainees have a variety of tasters before making a choice. The practical work tasters are complemented by off-the-job guidance, training and support.

44. During 2000-01, 27 trainees started training and, of the 20 who moved on, five trainees started occupational training with Arthur Rank Training, six found employment and one progressed to further education. This represents a progression rate of 60 per cent. During 1999-2000, of 13 leavers, six started further training and one found employment, a progression rate of 54 per cent.

45. The structure and design of the programme is not sufficiently flexible to meet the very diverse needs of all the trainees for whom it is intended. The careers service provides some information about the previous experience and aspirations of each trainee. During induction at Arthur Rank Training, staff find out more about trainees and conduct a basic skills assessment. There is no in-depth assessment for each individual to find out what they want to do, what they might be capable of achieving and what barriers they need to overcome. The range of options available is narrow. It includes project work at Arthur Rank Training and work tasters with employers or within occupational training. These practical activities take place over four days a week. On the remaining day, trainees undertake training in information technology, communication skills, practical work skills, literacy, numeracy, and job search. There are also some invited speakers and visits to employers. The range of options helps some trainees to find out about

occupational areas and make informed choices. It does not enable trainees with more complex barriers to learning to identify and overcome obstacles. Some of the more able trainees find the options boring.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 2

46. Arthur Rank Training sees the promotion of equality of opportunity as central to all its activities. Its equal opportunities policy and procedures reflect current practice and are reviewed annually. Trainees are adequately protected from harassment and bullying. There are systems for the collection and analysis of data relating to equal opportunities. Fewer than 3 per cent of trainees are women; 8 per cent are from minority ethnic groups; 13 per cent have a disability. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. They identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded the same grade as that in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good range of initiatives to attract disadvantaged young people
- ◆ good analysis of equal opportunities data
- ◆ well-recorded equal opportunities policies and procedures
- ◆ effective treatment of equal opportunities issues during induction

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ stereotypical gender imbalance
- ◆ insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities during trainees' progress reviews
- ◆ missed opportunities to promote equal opportunities in marketing materials

47. Within the Arthur Rank Training strategic plan there is a specific objective to work with a range of partners to increase participation in existing and new programmes. This is closely linked to the organisation's objective of seeking to provide opportunities for occupational training and personal development for young people who, for reasons of social or educational disadvantage, may not have benefited from their school education. There is a long-established programme which targets disaffected school pupils from years 10 and 11. The programme includes a multi-skill workshop and a job-search project. Practical activities are used to motivate the young people and attendance is good. Many pupils achieve national skills profile qualifications in communication and numeracy. Whilst some pupils who undertake the programme opt to sit GCSE examinations, approximately 50 per cent join work-based training. Other initiatives include close links with local youth organisations and special schools. A marketing event takes place at a local young offenders' prison. The purpose of this is to give the young offenders

an insight into the training opportunities available upon their release. Open days are arranged for the careers service to demonstrate how Arthur Rank Training can help disadvantaged young people. As a result of these activities, many young people who might have avoided training after the age of 16 are realising their potential and becoming employed.

48. Arthur Rank Training monitors applications in terms of gender and ethnicity and gives the results in an annual report. In the year ending July 2000, 16 per cent of applications were from women and 13 per cent were from people from minority ethnic groups. The data about applicants are used in action-planning. For example, an additional minibus has been purchased to bring trainees from remote rural areas and advertising has been aimed at under-represented groups. Analysis of the data over time has shown that there is a decline in the number of women trainees. A trainees' forum has been organised to discuss possible reasons for this decline and some actions have been agreed to overcome the difficulty. Data are collected about trainees' work placements. This alerts Arthur Rank Training to any high level of turnover at a particular placement so that they can check that it is not the result of the employer's attitude.

49. The equal opportunities policy statement and associated procedures are presented in a format which is easy to follow. They cover issues such as recruitment, selection and disability. Detailed information is produced on grievance procedures and on how equal opportunities is promoted during training. Trainees receive a detailed agreement which describes what they are entitled to, acceptable behaviour and what to do if they experience harassment or bullying. The review of these documents is the responsibility of one person and the review cycle is such that the most recent legislation relating to equal opportunities has not yet been taken into account.

50. Equal opportunities is dealt with effectively during the trainees' induction programme. All trainees have a good recollection of this and are able to speak confidently about equal opportunities issues and what constitutes unacceptable behaviour. All trainees know what to do if they experience any harassment or bullying. The induction uses very effective and interactive training methods to cover equal opportunities. A video is linked to activities which challenge trainees' views on topics such as harassment, racism, learning disabilities, inappropriate jokes and sexism. Where possible, the induction includes an element of team building, which seeks to build a mutually supportive attitude through outdoor exercises such as raft building and an assault course.

51. The proportion of men and women on most programmes conforms to gender stereotyping and little has been done to overcome this. The exception is business administration, where most trainees are men. Over 80 per cent of those who apply to Arthur Rank Training are men, and there is a tendency for the careers service to refer mainly men. Arthur Rank Training is aware of this issue. It has identified that its rural location, combined with the male atmosphere, is a real barrier to women trainees. In an attempt to attract more women, a training programme in care has been introduced. Of the two trainees following this programme, one is a man.

52. Trainees' progress reviews do not formally tackle equal opportunities issues although there is a good level of informal monitoring. Opportunities to develop trainees' understanding of equal opportunities issues throughout their training programmes are missed. Employers' policies and procedures on equal opportunities are not monitored.

53. Arthur Rank Training uses display boards for marketing its programmes. These show images of trainees undertaking real jobs which to a limited extent challenge stereotypical views. There is a small amount of written marketing material but it is not written in a style which would make it easy to read by a trainee with additional support needs. There are no large print versions for trainees who are visually impaired or any versions in languages other than English.

Trainee support

Grade 3

54. Most trainees are referred to Arthur Rank Training by the careers service. A few trainees are referred by other agencies or contact the organisation directly in response to marketing activities. Applications are made on a detailed application form and candidates are invited for interview. This interview usually lasts for half a day and includes a brief tour of the training centre. The interviewer establishes the needs and aspirations of the applicant and the process is recorded. The applicant is informed of the outcome of the interview by letter.

55. Successful applicants usually attend a two-week induction programme during which they are informed of their rights and responsibilities and introduced to their vocational training programme. Health and safety features heavily in this induction programme. The two-week programme also introduces school leavers to the world of work and includes personal effectiveness training. Older trainees who have not joined the programme straight from school are given a shorter induction with less emphasis on personal development. Trainees' basic skills are assessed during the induction period and additional ones prepared by the trainers. The outcome of the basic skills diagnostic tests determines the level of additional learning support offered to the trainee.

56. Trainees are placed with a variety of employers at the end of their induction programme. They receive a further induction specific to the workplace at the start of their work placement. A trainer/assessor visits trainees quarterly to monitor the trainee's progress in the workplace, undertake assessments and provide pastoral support.

57. All but one of the 106 trainees were identified by the careers service as requiring additional learning support. Eighty-nine trainees were assessed as having no realistic prospect of achieving a level 2 NVQ. Fifty-eight trainees were assessed as requiring foundation level literacy training and 18 trainees were assessed as requiring foundation level numeracy training.

58. Inspectors found strengths and weaknesses additional to those identified in the self-assessment report and awarded a lower grade.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good links with external support agencies
- ◆ good pastoral support
- ◆ very effective induction process
- ◆ very good celebration of trainees' successes

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ failure to individualise training plans
- ◆ ineffective progress reviews

59. Arthur Rank Training has good working relationships with a variety of support agencies. These include the local careers service, the probation service and other specialist organisations. Specialist training organisations are used to provide good personal effectiveness training. Examples include a survival-training course on the island of Mull and the London sailing project. Arthur Rank Training usually sends two trainees each year on each of these two projects. Bursaries from a charitable trust support trainees experiencing financial difficulties. Specialist support agencies and other organisations such as the police service are used during the induction programme to contribute to the life skills aspect of the programme.

60. Trainees receive good pastoral support during their training programmes. A member of Arthur Rank Training staff contacts the home of any trainee who fails to attend a training session. Staff deal with trainees' personal problems in a supportive and sympathetic manner. A trainee experiencing problems with housing following the birth of his child was given constructive help in dealing with the relevant agencies.

61. Personal effectiveness is an integral part of all Arthur Rank Training's activities. The induction covers many life skills such as teamwork and managing finances. Trainees are made aware of their responsibilities as well as their rights. Those who do not honour their responsibilities receive timely warnings and, if necessary, sanctions.

62. All trainees undertake a comprehensive two-week induction programme at the start of their training. This is well structured and provides an effective introduction to the vocational training programmes with a strong emphasis on health and safety. Trainees are able to remember what they have been taught and to show that they have understood important topics such as equal opportunities. The induction programme has a strong emphasis on personal development and includes practical exercises in team building and problem-solving. Staff evaluate trainees' abilities and aptitudes during the induction period and this information is used to match

trainees to a suitable placement. The quality of the induction programme is monitored by a questionnaire which is completed by trainees at the end of induction. The responses are summarised by managers and this process has led to several improvements. Examples include increasing the amount of practical work undertaken during the induction period and providing better recreational facilities.

63. Arthur Rank Training has several ways of celebrating trainees' successes and this has a motivating effect on trainees. Trainees are able to achieve certification of achievements at an early stage in their training. For example, some obtain a qualification in handling fire extinguishers; others obtain a more general health and safety qualification. Trainees' successes are celebrated in a high-profile awards ceremony at the Royal Agricultural Show in July. Several prominent celebrities have participated in the awards ceremony and this has helped to increase the sense of achievement of successful trainees. Successful trainees also receive bonus payments on achievement of a qualification. One payment is made for achievement of an NVQ; other payments are made for other qualifications such as wordpower and numberpower.

64. Training plans are not individualised. Some do not take account of trainees' prior knowledge and experience. Development plans do not specify short-term targets and milestones. As a result, the monitoring of trainees' progress is not as effective as it might be.

65. In all occupational areas except business administration, trainees' progress reviews are ineffective. A member of the training staff normally carries these out in the workplace. A grading system is used to assess trainees' performance in the workplace. The work-placement provider or employer usually makes this assessment. Trainees are graded on a variety of criteria such as timekeeping and attitude to work. Good grades do not attract comments and poor grades are not accompanied by advice on how to improve performance. This lack of constructive feedback reduces the value of the progress-review process. Trainers do not provide trainees with short-term goals and targets. Action plans tend to focus on personal effectiveness and do not relate to vocational skills or competencies.

Management of training

Grade 4

66. Arthur Rank Training operates, under the direction of an executive committee, as an autonomous unit within the Arthur Rank Centre. The executive committee meets four times a year to discuss progress in the context of the business plan, contracts, training programmes and developments. The strategic planning and day-to-day running of the centre is the responsibility of the director of training. Arthur Rank Training has 22 members of staff, of whom 15 work full time while the remaining seven are employed part time. Tutors and support officers report to the training manager while all the other staff report to the director of training. Some training is subcontracted to a training organisation and five further education colleges but most is given using the facilities at the NAC. The organisation achieved the Investors in People Award in 1998 and was successfully re-assessed

in 2000. Arthur Rank Training has written procedures for staff recruitment, selection and appraisal. Members of staff have an annual appraisal at which their performance is reviewed. A training and development plan is agreed with each of them. Some aspects of management identified as strengths in the self-assessment report were considered by inspectors to be no more than normal practice. The report failed to identify the weaknesses identified by inspectors, who awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good internal communication
- ◆ good use of management information
- ◆ effective links with external organisations

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate management of subcontractors
- ◆ ineffective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ insufficient staff development in training techniques

67. There are frequent formal staff meetings. Weekly lunchtime tutors' meetings focus on trainees' progress and any emerging problems relating to training. The contracts manager or training manager attends these meetings. Notes are taken and circulated. There are monthly meetings of all staff when items such as recruitment, NVQ performance, budget updates and developments are discussed. The director of training meets with the training and contracts managers monthly to discuss progress against targets and issues raised at the staff meetings. These meetings usually have a set agenda. They are minuted but action points are not clearly identified. The director of training attends the executive meetings which are held every three months.

68. To support meetings and aid decision-making a range of reports is produced using the management-information system. The information officer has developed a range of reports which build on the standard reports provided by the software package. The management-information system is now a powerful management tool which provides a range of forecasts and a detailed analysis of historical data. Quarterly forecasts are made using data based on achievements compared with plans and contracts. Reports analysing leavers, time on programme, achievements and reasons for leaving are produced. There is also an extensive range of reports produced on a monthly basis. Reports compare enrolments, achievements and retention against the plan and the previous year's figures for each occupational area and overall. Trainee leaver reports identify the reasons why trainees leave programmes. Monthly planning reports are used to help tutors plan their work-placement visits. Data on applications and starts are analysed. These reports are discussed at the managers and staff's meetings to identify areas for action.

69. There are a large number of links with external organisations which help the organisation to achieve its goals. There are close working relationships with the careers service which is kept informed of opportunities for trainees to start on the various programmes. One organisation has recently given money for the development of facilities. Another provides rent-free buildings at the NAC. Trainees can also apply to a bursary fund for additional support for the purchase of tools or additional training.

70. Subcontracts with the colleges specify the frequency of attendance records and progress reports required. They also cover health and safety and equal opportunities and provide for Arthur Rank Training's staff to visit the colleges for liaison purposes. There is no requirement for the colleges to provide Arthur Rank Training with schemes of work, copies of external verifiers' reports or internal quality control reports. There is no provision to allow Arthur Rank Training's staff to monitor the quality of the off-the-job training and assessment. However, the subcontractual arrangements for business administration and information technology adequately cover these aspects. Contracts with work-placement providers and employers refer only to the fact that trainees must be on day- or block-release to attend off-the-job training. There is no reference to employers' role in providing the on-the-job training and enabling trainees to produce work-based evidence.

71. There is no co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training. On-the-job training is not planned. Supervisors do not receive copies of trainees' off-the-job training programmes or timetables. They are insufficiently aware of the requirements, range and structure of the NVQ or the foundation modern apprenticeship framework. When trainees are not in a work placement they do not have an effective action plan. For example, a trainee on a business administration programme was not in a work placement; the tutor was only at the training centre for two days in the week; for the other three days, the trainee was not given a structured programme of work. Sometimes trainees join other groups of trainees and repeat training they have already received. These trainees become demotivated.

72. Few staff have qualifications in training and there has been insufficient staff development. The staff training and development plan has identified the need for key skills training and training on dealing with difficult situations and challenging behaviour but makes no reference to programmes to develop training and assessment skills.

Quality assurance

Grade 4

73. Arthur Rank Training has a quality assurance policy, associated procedures and an internal audit system. The director of training has overall responsibility for quality assurance, but designated staff auditors check for non-compliance with the operational procedures. The training provider complies with the requirements of

the TEC contract and is designated as a preferred supplier of special training needs. Quality assurance is subject to discussion at the quarterly executive, monthly staff and weekly team meetings. The senior management team also meets every two or three weeks to review performance against the contract with the TEC. The training provider has been collecting feedback from trainees and work-placement providers through an established system of evaluation questionnaires. Arthur Rank Training has produced three self-assessment reports and associated action plans since 1998. Inspectors identified strengths and weaknesses in addition to those given in the current self-assessment report. They awarded a lower grade than that in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good improvement initiatives
- ◆ good use of bench-marking with other similar training providers

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate internal verification
- ◆ insufficiently rigorous self-assessment
- ◆ ineffective monitoring of subcontractors

74. Arthur Rank Training seeks feedback from all its trainees and employers. This had led to continuous improvement of the now very effective trainee induction programme. Another improvement is the development of the internal auditing system. Staff not only have the responsibility of auditing procedures, but ensure that any non-compliance is rectified. A further improvement is the designation of a member of staff to co-ordinate internal verification across the five occupational areas. Senior managers have begun to observe the tutors' training sessions. Trainees have indicated, through evaluation forms, an improvement in the quality of training since the observations started.

75. Arthur Rank Training is represented on a working group with the CCTE and other training providers who offer training opportunities to young people with learning difficulties and social problems. This group meets twice-monthly and shares good practice. Arthur Rank Training has organised developmental days at the NAC show ground for staff from these training providers.

76. Internal verification practices are poor in all vocational areas except business administration. Staff in three of the occupational areas use the organisation's standard verification documents; those in the other two areas use their own systems. Most verification is carried out at the end of training programmes. There are no verifiers and assessors' meetings. The awarding body's external verifiers have indicated that internal verification is inadequate, but Arthur Rank Training has failed to act. The past three reports from the motor vehicle external verifier have identified poor practice in internal verification.

77. The provider has a quality statement, operational procedures and a clear set of controlled documents, which are reviewed and updated yearly. An auditing procedure has recently been introduced, but has yet to have any impact on the quality of training. The training provider is audited by the CCTE and complies with its contractual agreements. The training provider's self-assessment report was insufficiently self-critical.

78. Arthur Rank Training uses five further education colleges as subcontractors and has only basic service level agreements with them. The training at the colleges has not been quality assured and is not included in the auditing system. The reporting of trainees' progress is often too late to address any learning or behavioural issues.