



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT NOVEMBER 2000

Isle of Wight School
of
Food and Wine

SUMMARY

The Isle of Wight School of Food and Wine provides hospitality training for young people. Training is poorly co-ordinated and planned. Key skills are not integrated into the programmes. However, trainees receive good support from their employers in the workplace, and are visited regularly by occupationally experienced staff. Off-the-job training facilities are good. Trainees have a broad understanding of equal opportunities issues, but the school does not adequately promote equality of opportunity. Most trainees are not given an initial assessment, and no account is taken of their prior learning and experience. The training which takes place in the workplace and off the job is poorly co-ordinated. Achievement and retention rates are low. Quality assurance arrangements are poor. There is no monitoring of the quality of the training provided, and internal verification is poor. However, actions are being taken to improve the quality of training.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Hospitality	4

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	4
Trainee support	4
Management of training	4
Quality assurance	5

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good support in the workplace
- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ clear understanding of equal opportunities issues by trainees

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates
- ◆ no integration of key skills with occupational training
- ◆ poor promotion of equal opportunities
- ◆ lack of initial assessment
- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ no monitoring of quality of training
- ◆ poor internal verification
- ◆ poor self-assessment

INTRODUCTION

1. The Isle of Wight School of Food and Wine was established as a government-funded training provider in April 1999. Before this, the organisation specialised in short commercial training courses in hospitality for local clients. The school still offers commercial training programmes. The school is part of an organisation called the Five Star Group, which also operates an outside event catering company and a hospitality recruitment company. The group is run by a husband and wife team who also act as directors of all three parts of the group, and has its head office in the town centre in Newport on the Isle of Wight. It moved to these premises in September this 2000. The school has built a small restaurant and kitchen here for off-the-job training. The premises also include administration offices, and small meeting rooms, which are rented out to local companies when they are not being used for training. In addition to this, the group has purpose-built kitchen facilities on the outskirts of the town at Forest Road. These are used by the catering company as a food production unit, and also as off-the-job training facilities for the school. Until recently, all three companies operated from these premises. The school employs one full-time member of staff, and one part-time trainer/assessor. One of the directors and their son also take active roles as off-the-job trainers. The group employs two administrative assistants, who work for all three companies.

2. The school has a contract with Wight Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), which comes under the Isle of Wight Partnership. It has six foundation modern apprentices, seven advanced modern apprentices and four New Deal clients on the hospitality employment option offered by the Isle of Wight Unit of Delivery. The school offers training in a wide variety of crafts. These include food preparation and cooking, food service, bar service, quick service, housekeeping, and reception. Most of the current trainees are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in food preparation and cooking, and one advanced modern apprentice is working towards an NVQ in hospitality service. All trainees are employed on the Isle of Wight in hotels, restaurants, a local yacht club, and golf club.

3. The Isle of Wight has a population of approximately 125,000 people of whom 53 per cent are economically active. Employment is mainly in the areas of wholesale and retail distribution, hotels and catering, public services and administration, and health and social work. Businesses are mainly small and medium-sized enterprises, with most businesses employing fewer than 25 people. Only 13 companies employ 200 or more people. The island's unemployment rate is consistently above the national average, and is subject to dramatic seasonal fluctuations. This figure ranges between 12 per cent and 4.5 per cent, depending on the time of year, reflecting the island's dependence upon the tourism industry. The unemployment rate currently stands at 4.7 per cent, compared to the national average of 3.4 per cent, and 1.8 per cent for the Southeast of England. Most job vacancies are in the retail and hotel and catering sectors.



4. Minority ethnic groups in the Isle of Wight make up less than 1 per cent of the working population. This is below the national average of 6.4 per cent. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) was 44.6 per cent, compared with the national average of 49.3 per cent. Over 80 per cent of school leavers continue in full-time education at school or college.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. The Isle of Wight School of Food and Wine completed its first self-assessment in July 2000. One of the managing directors attended a conference organised by the Training Standards Council, and prepared the self-assessment report, with the assistance of staff and the TEC. The report contained good background information about the local economy, but lacked detail in the occupational and generic areas. The self-assessment process has not had an impact on the quality assurance and management arrangements in the organisation. However, the organisation has made considerable changes since the report was produced, with the addition of another full-time member of staff.

6. A team of three inspectors spent a total of nine days at the Isle of Wight School of Food and Wine during November 2000. Interviews were held with 10 trainees and one New Deal client, eight employers or workplace supervisors, the external verifier, and all staff. Seven work-placement sites were visited, as well as the off-the-job training provider. Inspectors examined trainees' portfolios and records of progress. Other documents inspected included internal and external verification documents, TEC contracts and audit reports, recently produced quality assurance documents and procedures, and publicity and marketing material. One off-the-job training session was observed and was awarded a grade 2.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Hospitality

Grade 4

7. There are 17 trainees and New Deal clients working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3. Of these, seven are advanced modern apprentices, six are foundation modern apprentices and four are New Deal clients. Two of the New Deal clients are working towards NVQs at level 2 in food and drink service, one is working towards a level 2 NVQ in hospitality service, and the other is working towards a level 2 NVQ in quick service. Eleven trainees are working towards NVQs at level 2 in food preparation and cooking, one towards an NVQ at level 2 in hospitality services and one towards an NVQ at level 3 in food preparation and cooking. The school offers a combination of both on- and off-the-job training to the trainees. Off-the-job training takes place at one of the two training centres operated by the school. This enables aspects of training which cannot be covered in the workplace to be provided by the trainers from the school. Trainees attend off-the-job training one day each week, at times suited to both themselves and their employers. All trainees are employed, in a range of catering establishments. The self-assessment report included both strengths and weaknesses with which inspectors agreed. Additional strengths and weaknesses were identified by inspectors, who awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good off-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates
- ◆ poor planning of training
- ◆ no integration of key skills with vocational training
- ◆ ineffective target setting

8. The school has good, well-resourced off-the-job training facilities at both its town centre and out-of-town premises. A well-equipped training kitchen enables trainees to achieve the skills which they cannot gain in the workplace and to complete the NVQ units identified in their individual training plans. Trainees attend the out-of-town premises on a day-release basis and often tuition is given on a one-to-one basis. The school's town-centre premises include a restaurant and kitchen, which trainees use to improve their skills both in food preparation and service. Also at this site is a room for training in theory and a learning resource centre, which is used for training in theory and portfolio-building. Both sites have a good range of learning materials which have been either purchased commercially or developed by the school. By attending the training centres, trainees have frequent and regular contact with training staff.

9. Off-the-job training is arranged flexibly to meet the needs of both trainees and employers. Attendance at the training centres is a mandatory component of the programmes and this is recognised by employers. Trainees attend at times suited to their work commitments. This means they attend more frequently outside of the peak tourist season, when their workloads are smaller and employers can allow more flexibility for trainees to attend. A timetable for each trainee's attendance is prepared in advance, although information on what is to be covered during these periods is not sufficiently detailed.

10. The school has recently recruited additional training advisors. All staff are well qualified, with up-to-date occupational qualifications and industrial experience. The diverse backgrounds and experience of the training personnel cover all aspects of the hospitality industry. Staff maintain a high level of current industrial experience to ensure that training is kept up to date with practices in the industry.

11. Of the six foundation modern apprentices recruited in 1999-2000, three left early without a qualification. The other three trainees are still on the programme. In 2000-01, of the five foundation modern apprentices recruited, four remain on the programme. The fifth one left early with no qualifications. Of the four foundation modern apprentices recruited in 1999-2000, two have left early with no qualifications, one is in the process of converting to an advanced modern apprenticeship and the remaining trainee is still on the programme.

12. Individual training plans include details of the NVQ programme and planned completion dates. Any optional units chosen by trainees are fully discussed with them by trainers and their employers to ensure that they can be covered in the work placements. Neither on- nor off-the-job training is planned and the two are not co-ordinated. Employers are unaware of the training undertaken by trainees off the job and trainees often repeat work already done.

13. Trainees have so far gathered little evidence for key skills. Most of the trainees who have been on the programme since it was first started have little understanding of key skills. Key skills workshops have recently been introduced and the school is in the process of developing the required learning materials for trainees to use in evidence gathering. Key skills are not integrated into the vocational training.

14. Training plans are discussed with both trainees and employers to ensure that they meet the needs of both parties. Trainees' progress reviews are carried out at monthly intervals. These lack sufficient detail and trainees are not clear what they have to do in order to achieve their qualifications. Some trainees are unsure what they have achieved and trainees' achievements are not adequately monitored. There are no work-based assessors and so there is little assessment in the workplace. This has been recognised by the school and is being addressed. A recently appointed assessor has started to carry out assessments in the workplace.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 4

15. The Isle of Wight School of Food and Wine has an equal opportunities policy and statement. The policy is signed by one of the directors and has been recently updated to include a statement on harassment and discrimination. The policy is included in the induction for trainees and staff. Data on trainees' ethnicity, gender and disability are collected at induction, but are not analysed. The director with responsibility for the school attended an equal opportunities seminar organised by the TEC in June 2000. The school has links with the local careers service to access signers if required. The school is able to offer the basic food hygiene certificate programme in several languages. Of the 17 trainees and clients, 12 are men and five are women. The self-assessment report included two strengths and two weaknesses. Inspectors identified different strengths and one additional weakness, and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ clear understanding of equal opportunities issues by trainees
- ◆ good access to off-the-job training facilities for those with restricted mobility

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate monitoring of employers' equal opportunities arrangements
- ◆ poor promotion of equal opportunities
- ◆ no analysis or evaluation of equal opportunities data

16. All trainees have a good understanding of equal opportunities issues. They recall the equal opportunities information given at induction, and have a copy of the policy. Trainees understand the different forms of harassment and discrimination, and are clear about the action they can take if necessary. They are also informed at induction about the complaints and appeals procedures. However, the school does not subsequently check trainees' understanding of equal opportunities. All trainees are given a post induction questionnaire to complete, but only one question concerns equal opportunities, and this relates to employers' policies. No follow-up training on equal opportunities is given to trainees after induction.

17. Off-the-job training facilities at Forest Road and at the new premises in the centre of Newport are well equipped for those with restricted mobility. The facilities at Forest Road include an access ramp for wheelchair users, wide corridors and access to training rooms. There is also a purpose-built toilet facility for those with physical disabilities. All practical facilities at both sites are on the ground floor. Work facilities were moved for one former trainee, who was partially sighted, so that he could see better and was nearer natural light.

18. The school does not have any systems to check employers' equal opportunities procedures. If employers do not have a policy of their own, the school does not encourage them to adopt their own. It does not check those employers who do have their own policy to ensure that it is being adhered to. No checks are made of employers' understanding of equal opportunities or of whether any complaints have been made by trainees.

19. The Isle of Wight School of Food and Wine does not promote equal opportunities. The publicity material it uses does not contain a reference to equal opportunities. The school offers taster days for pupils from one local school. The school has also established strong links with local community groups and schools to aid recruitment, but it does not actively target under-represented groups. Equal opportunities is not a standing agenda item at staff meetings.

20. The school does not analyse or evaluate the data which it collects on equal opportunities. The data are used only to ensure that it complies with its contract with the TEC. Data on trainees' recruitment are available, but no efforts are made to identify trends or use the information to plan future recruitment drives. No specific targets are set for recruiting or for retaining trainees in terms of ethnicity, gender or disability.

Trainee support

Grade 4

21. All trainees are employed, and are usually recruited onto programmes through the school's contacts in the hospitality industry. Until recently, trainees did not receive an initial assessment. The initial assessment process has since been developed. The school offers additional one-to-one support for trainees who require this. Reviews of trainees' progress are carried out every eight weeks. Induction is undertaken both in the workplace and off the job, and trainees are given written details of their programme and a copy of the equal opportunities policy. The self-assessment report included two strengths and two weaknesses. Inspectors identified additional strengths to those highlighted in the self-assessment report, one additional weakness, and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ high level of support in the workplace
- ◆ good access to additional training courses

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no initial assessment for most trainees
- ◆ no accreditation of trainees' prior learning
- ◆ poor use of documents relating to trainee support

22. Trainees are all employed in establishments which offer a diverse range of learning opportunities within their craft. Where trainees cannot achieve the full range of skills required by the NVQ, they complete these off the job. Employers are highly supportive and give trainees the chance to practise their skills when needed. Many put additional dishes on the menu or blackboard to allow them to do this. Some employers purchase books and knives for their trainees, and most supply uniforms or chef's whites. Most employers give trainees an additional day off each week to attend off-the-job training, and many encourage trainees to spend time during working hours completing theory work if time allows. However, most employers are unclear about the NVQ programme requirements, and have not seen copies of the occupational standards.

23. The school offers commercial courses and demonstrations for local companies and organisations. Trainees are often given the opportunity to attend these free of charge at the school's premises. The school has recently opened a key skills support centre at its main office building in Newport. Trainees have access to this during office hours, and can also work on the computer. The centre has been open only a few weeks, and only a few trainees have used it so far.

24. The four trainees who have joined the school since October 2000 have all had

an initial assessment of their key skills. Trainees joining before this date have not had an initial assessment of their key or basic skills. Some of these trainees, who have been on the programme for some time, have only recently had an initial assessment. Only those trainees or clients who have statements from school are identified as requiring additional support. One New Deal client has learning difficulties and requires additional support, and one trainee has dyslexia. Both receive one-to-one support from the school. No staff at the school are qualified in specialist support, but trainees are referred to external specialists.

25. Several trainees have gained previous experience in the industry before joining the programme. However, no account is taken of prior skills or knowledge when developing individual training plans. One trainee had previously been employed as a chef for five years, and had attended a catering course at college for three months. He had already completed an NVQ at level 2 in business administration which had included units of key skills. Another had been a chef for two years. They had both worked in high-class establishments in a range of job roles. This information was not entered onto their training plans. Both trainees have been on the programme for almost a year, and achieved their level 2 NVQs in food preparation and cooking in August 2000.

26. Information from progress reviews and monitoring visits is recorded on the same form. Some progress review sheets are not dated or signed by the employer or workplace supervisor. Others are not signed by trainees. Some reviews are very brief and the resulting action plans do not contain sufficient detail for trainees to act on. Trainees and supervisors have only recently started to be given copies of progress-review sheets. Individual training plans are not always updated. Some lack details of progress reviews. Trainees are not aware of their individual target dates for completing NVQ units, as these were not recorded on their plans.

Management of training

Grade 4

27. The Five Star Group comprises three divisions, a catering company with an emphasis on outside and event catering, a recruitment agency, and the Isle of Wight School of Food and Wine. The school's staff include a working director, a full-time trainer/assessor based at the off-the-job training venue, which is also a commercial kitchen, and two other, new full-time members of staff employed as training advisors. One of these training advisors is qualified to assess and verify and the other is working towards these qualifications. The school has plans to introduce work-based assessors, with seven new recruits due to start a course. An external consultant has been used as an internal verifier, and has undertaken a survey of trainees and employers. The school has a training room available at the head office for training in theory and for assistance with trainees' portfolio-building. The commercial kitchen of the catering company is used as an off-the-job-training venue. There are no written procedures for staff recruitment and induction.

28. The self-assessment report for this area was brief. Inspectors agreed with the strength about good contacts with other organisations, and the weakness about little recording of management information. They identified additional weaknesses, and a lower grade was awarded than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good links with external bodies

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ inadequate management-information system
- ◆ unclear staff roles and responsibilities

29. There is good, regular communication between employers and supervisors, particularly during staff's visits to workplaces and through telephone contact, which allows them to discuss any issues affecting the trainees. A new member of staff was recently appointed to the school, and employers are now given more information and have a better understanding of their trainees' overall training programme. The school has developed good links with many other external bodies. It has been involved with local schools, and a local college, organising careers events and work-experience activities. It has developed close links with the awarding body and external verifier. It has produced a newsletter called 'The Stock Pot', which is sent to employers and other clients and includes good information on the school, but employers of trainees have not yet been included on the circulation list. The school also works closely with a local business group and is involved with a local strategy group for tourism and hospitality, as well as taking part in other projects and events such as careers events.

30. The training provided by employers in the workplace, and off the job by the school, is of a satisfactory quality. However, the school has no arrangements for co-ordinating the two. Employers are unclear about off-the-job activities, and the off-the-job trainer is not well informed about the training in the workplace. Trainees sometimes duplicate training and work activities, some of which are not always relevant to either their job or their NVQ. The school has recently taken action to address this situation, by providing employers with more information on the qualification and the training required to meet trainees' needs. For example, one employer has purchased some fresh fish and changed the menu to allow a trainee to gain practical experience in the workplace of preparing and cooking this particular product. In another case, it has been identified that a trainee would benefit from being trained mainly in the workplace and to reduce the amount of off-the-job training.

31. The school's management-information system is inadequate, with restricted access to data and poor-quality and unreliable data available to guide decision-making. There are no documents to monitor trainees' progress and achievement rates, to review equal opportunities data, or to monitor assessment and verification activity. Trainees leaving the programme are not systematically monitored. Targets are not routinely set and reviewed. Other information is brief, for example employers' agreements are not all on file, and trainees' records are sometimes incomplete.

32. The organisation has written no formal procedures for recruitment, induction, staff development or appraisal. There are no job descriptions, and no records to clarify individuals' roles and responsibilities, or levels of decision-making and authority. The school provides some staff training, with staff attending courses and taking qualifications as and when required, but it has no process to plan to meet staff training requirements. A director has attended an equal opportunities awareness course, and other staff have been on health and safety awareness sessions.

33. No staff are trained to meet trainees' specialist needs, but the school has links with organisations which can provide the appropriate support. Staff meetings are not minuted and identified actions, and the responsibility for them, can not be monitored to ensure that they are successfully implemented.

Quality assurance

Grade 5

34. The Isle of Wight School of Food and Wine has recently produced a quality assurance procedures manual. A copy of this manual has been given to all members of staff. Before this there was no designated quality assurance manual, only a loose collection of statements. Performance against the TEC contract is reviewed monthly and monitored using a manually updated wall chart where comparisons between targets and actual performance can be identified.

35. The self-assessment report was the first to be completed by the school. It was produced by one director. The report did not accurately reflect the training programmes, and did not identify the appropriate weaknesses, resulting in an insufficient action plan. Inspectors did not agree with any of the grades given, and awarded lower grades in all areas. They agreed with the weakness in the self-assessment report relating to internal verification, but identified additional weaknesses.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ action taken to implement new quality assurance procedures

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ failure of quality assurance system to cover all aspects of training
- ◆ poor self-assessment process
- ◆ poor internal verification
- ◆ no monitoring of quality of training

36. A new member of staff has recently been appointed to identify and implement improvements to the training programmes. A detailed quality assurance manual has been established which contains relevant procedures to be followed. Everyone involved in training, including trainees and employers, now has a better understanding of training procedures. The school has recently started to evaluate on- and off-the-job training, involving employers, to identify any problems and take action to meet the needs of trainees. Surveys of trainees and employers were undertaken for the first time in the three months before inspection and these identified some shortfalls, for example in trainees and employers' understanding of the assessment and verification process. The surveys were brief with regards to the questions asked and produced little information.

37. A new quality assurance manual is now in use. However, procedures, such as holding regular minuted meetings are still not followed. The quality assurance system does not cover all aspects of training, such as initial assessment, accreditation of prior learning and staff appraisal.

38. The self-assessment report was the first to be produced by the school. Only one director was involved in its production. The views of others, including trainees, employers, and staff within the organisation, were not sought, and the resulting report was not an accurate reflection of the organisation. Many weaknesses were not acknowledged. The resulting action plan was insufficient to enable the school to improve its programmes.

39. The internal verification process is poor. Since the programmes started in April 1999 there was no internal verification activity until August 2000, when a consultant was brought in to verify the work of two trainees who had completed their NVQs. There has been no planning of internal verification activity, and insufficient sampling of portfolios and assessment practice. In one case, an unregistered assessor has signed records of NVQ units completed. The school has recently employed a new member of staff who is qualified to verify, and has a plan for the introduction of work-based assessors.

40. No action has been taken to monitor the quality of the training provided on or off the job, and there is no observation of off-the-job training. The new quality assurance manual does not contain any processes for evaluating the ways in which training is provided.

41. Interviews for trainees leaving the programme have recently been introduced, with one interview carried out by the time of the inspection. There has been no



recording or evaluation of trainees leaving and their destinations. Feedback is not collected during the progress-review process, as this has been inconsistent, with gaps in dates, and so trainees and employers have not had the opportunity to record their comments and highlight any problems. Although the school's performance against the TEC contract is monitored, other targets are not routinely set.