



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT FEBRUARY 2001

Newham Community  
Employment Project  
trading as  
Landmark Training

## SUMMARY

Newham Community Employment Project, trading as Landmark Training provides satisfactory work-based training for young people in business administration and foundation for work. The trainees in business administration are placed with a wide variety of employers but little evidence is gathered from the workplace. The foundation for work trainees are well motivated and achievements are good. Equal opportunities practices are good at Landmark Training Limited but are not systematically monitored in the workplace. There is good pastoral support for trainees. Initial assessment is not linked to training plans and progress reviews lack depth. Good use is made of staff meetings to address issues relating to the day-to-day management of learning programmes. The company has a quality assurance system but measures to assure the quality of all areas of training are not fully established.

### GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Business administration	3
Foundation for work	3

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

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good theory training in business administration
- ◆ high retention and achievement rates in foundation for work
- ◆ good representation of minority ethnic groups in local population among staff and trainees
- ◆ well-promoted counselling service
- ◆ effective internal communication
- ◆ well-established self-assessment process

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor involvement of employers in training
- ◆ lack of flexibility in business administration training
- ◆ poor rates of progression in foundation for work
- ◆ unsystematic initial assessment
- ◆ little target-setting in progress reviews
- ◆ no training for staff in teaching basic skills
- ◆ lack of established management systems and procedures
- ◆ no rigorous evaluation of learning programmes

## INTRODUCTION

1. Newham Community Employment Project trading as Landmark Training (Landmark) is located in Stratford, East London. It was established in 1978 as a registered company limited by guarantee. It has charitable status. The company was set up to provide training, guidance and support for young people, some of whom face barriers to employment because of their additional learning support needs. The company has a contract with London East Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and offers training in business administration, retailing and in foundation for work. Currently there are 10 trainees on advanced modern apprenticeships, of whom one is in customer service, 27 on other work-based training for young people and 40 on foundation for work programmes. At the time of the inspection, the trainees were working towards NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3 in business administration. The foundation for work trainees were working towards prescribed milestones. Customer service was not inspected. The company employs nine staff. It has one training centre, where all training is carried out. No subcontractors are used. The company does not have a contract with the Employment Service to offer any New Deal work.

2. The London Borough of Newham is one of the most socially and economically deprived areas of the United Kingdom. In 1998, a third of households had a gross annual income of less than £10,000. In the borough, people from minority ethnic groups form 42 per cent of the population, compared with 23 per cent in Inner London, and 6.2 per cent across the United Kingdom as a whole. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grades C and above in Newham was 35 per cent, compared with the national average of 49 per cent. Landmark Training serves the local community and 80 per cent of its trainees have no GCSEs at grades C, and above and almost 60 per cent have no GCSEs at all. In January 2001, the unemployment rate in Newham stood at 10.3 per cent, compared with 3.7 per cent in London as a whole and the national average of 3.5 per cent.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

3. Landmark Training completed its first self-assessment report in November 1998. Managers were given training in self-assessment by consultants on behalf of the TEC. Since then, a self-assessment report has been completed annually. Regular staff meetings are structured on the self-assessment framework and a self-assessment committee meets every two months to assess progress in implementing action plans. Landmark Training Limited's third self-assessment report was completed in August 2000 with an update in December before the inspection. All staff were involved in preparing the report. Subject group trainers met and agreed the strengths and weaknesses and the grades. The head of training prepared the sections of the report on the generic aspects in consultation with other staff. The report contained a lot of information to back up each strength and weakness. The grades given by the company were accurate in four areas. Inspectors awarded lower grades for trainee support and management of training than those given by the company.

4. A team of three inspectors spent a total of 12 days at Landmark Training in February 2001. They viewed documents, including trainees' personal files, data on achievement and progression, TEC contracts, lesson plans and trainees' portfolios. Inspectors held interviews with 19 of Landmark Training's staff and six workplace supervisors. Inspectors visited eight employers' premises and interviewed 41 trainees. The following table shows the grades awarded to learning sessions observed by inspectors.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Business administration			2	1	1	4
Foundation for work		1	1			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Business administration

### Grade 3

5. Thirty-six trainees are on business administration programmes; nine are advanced modern apprentices in administration and 27 are on other work-based learning programmes for young people, working for an administration NVQ at level 1. All of the trainees on other work-based learning programmes for young people are unemployed but have work placements, mostly in charities or public sector organisations. Advanced modern apprentices are employed by a variety of

organisations including schools, charities, doctors' surgeries, and small companies. Trainees are recruited to the other work-based learning programmes following referral from the careers service. All the advanced modern apprentices are already employed when they are recruited. All trainees attend the training centres on a day-release basis: once each week for trainees on other work-based learning programmes and one day every fortnight for advanced modern apprentices. Three qualified assessors provide training and assessment and carry out progress reviews for the administration programme. Two assessors co-ordinate the programme of other work-based learning for young people and the other assessor co-ordinates the advanced modern apprenticeship programme. Trainees on other work-based learning for young people are interviewed and initially assessed by assessors. For the advanced modern apprenticeship programme, initial contact is made with the employer. Following this, the development officer interviews prospective advanced modern apprentices. Part one of the induction process is completed at this stage, which includes issuing a job-skills analysis. The second part of the induction includes an assessor interviewing the trainees individually, collecting the completed job-skills analysis and carrying out a key skills assessment. The actions resulting from this are added to standard individual learning plans agreed with trainees at the start of their programme. Over the past three years, retention and achievement rates have gone down. The rates of trainees leaving the programme early has increased from 40 per cent in 1997 to 65 per cent in 1999. Achievement of the targets on individual learning plans has decreased from 27 per cent in 1997 to 12 per cent in 1999. The advanced modern apprenticeship programme is too new for achievement to be judged.

6. In its self-assessment report, Landmark Training identified six strengths and five weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with two strengths relating to off-the-job training and good portfolios. Two strengths identified in the self-assessment report were more relevant to trainee support and equal opportunities. Two further strengths were considered to be normal practice. Inspectors identified additional strengths. Of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, inspectors agreed with one relating to the recording of achievement, while the remainder were more appropriate to trainee support or quality assurance. Inspectors identified additional weaknesses and gave the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

Year	2000-01	1999-2000	1998-99	1997-98
Starts	40	66	46	62
Achieved level 1 NVQ		8	18	26
Achieved level 2 NVQ		1	3	13
Achieved level 3 NVQ				
Achieved targets on individual learning plan		8	12	17
Converted to other programmes			3	7
Left early without qualifications	13	43	21	25
Left early with qualifications		7	10	13
Still in training	27	8		

### STRENGTHS

- ◆ frequent contact between assessors and trainees
- ◆ extensive training in theory
- ◆ excellent standard of work from level 1 NVQ trainees
- ◆ good development opportunities provided by work placements

### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate gathering of work-based evidence
- ◆ lack of flexibility in training
- ◆ poor involvement of employers in training
- ◆ poor recording of progress and achievement

7. Trainees on other work-based learning programmes for young people meet with assessors up to five times each month. This is achieved through weekly attendance at the training centre for off-the-job learning sessions and monthly visits from assessors. Off-the-job learning sessions include guided instruction, portfolio-building and individual discussions. Assessors visit trainees at their workplaces to carry out assessment and progress reviews. The frequent contact facilitates steady progress among trainees, and helps to ensure that training and assessment remain a priority for trainees and employers. Advanced modern apprentices receive instruction and support during fortnightly off-the-job sessions, as well as assessment and progress reviews during monthly visits from their assessor. The internal verification system is satisfactory.

8. Every off-the-job learning session for trainees on other work-based training for young people involves specific instruction in theory closely linked to the NVQ elements. Trainees build up their knowledge as they are guided by assessors and

they work progressively through the elements. Some topics, such as health and safety, are spread over several sessions. Trainees receive appropriate task sheets and complete the work during further study time or in their own time. This work is completed to a strict timescale, although some flexibility is allowed for personal circumstances where necessary. Training sessions involve the use of discussion and practical exercises. During these sessions, trainees are attentive and develop knowledge and skills, giving them confidence to take on extra responsibility at work. Advanced modern apprentices, appropriately, receive more challenging training. Subjects covered include delegation, effective communication and time management. Assessors pitch the training at a supervisory level, and equip trainees with theory which is well matched to the demands of the NVQ at level 3. Sessions are lively and include firm reinforcement of concepts covered. Trainees are effectively encouraged to work as a team and develop confidence by recording discussion points on flip charts for the group.

9. The tasks and exercises are linked with assessment through the use of standard assessment plans. Trainees are given longer time periods within which to identify and gather evidence of their performance at work. Their evidence is typically supplemented by between two and six assessors' observations, which are well recorded and clearly cross-referenced to the NVQ. Trainees on other work-based learning programmes build a substantial collection of completed task sheets and other written work, including personal statements and logs of incidents at work. The work produced by level 1 trainees is excellent and demonstrates a strong commitment to learning. They are able to recall confidently specific aspects of the theory covered.

10. Landmark Training has a well-established network of employers willing to provide work placements for trainees through continuous arrangements. Over the past three years, 25 per cent of trainees have gained employment in an area where unemployment is double the national average. Landmark Training's performance in achieving employment has declined over that time, however. The company strives to place unemployed trainees in the companies where advanced modern apprentices work, thereby enabling the advanced modern apprentices to gain good supervisory experience. Trainees on other work-based learning programmes benefit from the advanced modern apprentices' knowledge of the training process. All employers provide unemployed trainees and advanced modern apprentices with good supervision and support, taking part in progress review meetings with them and their assessors. They allow time for trainees to attend day-release sessions, and for assessors to carry out work-based assessments. Some unemployed trainees, and all advanced modern apprentices, receive training provided by their employers and work-placement providers on equal terms with other employees. In one case, an unemployed trainee is receiving training in computing funded by the work-placement provider. There are opportunities for trainees to develop the skills required for their administration qualifications, and often, skills at a higher level.

11. Despite the quality of work placements, assessors are not making the best use of direct sources of evidence, such as observations, witness testimony and professional discussion. Portfolios of trainees on other work-based learning

programmes, while demonstrating a substantial level of work, contain too much material generated off the job. Portfolios contain a small proportion of work-product evidence. In some portfolios, there is evidence of only two or three observations, despite trainees receiving visits every month. The extent of trainees' use of work-based evidence is constrained by the use of common assessment plans which emphasise standard tasks and worksheets. Witness testimonies are in the form of signed statements written by trainees. There is little encouragement for employers to write witness testimonies.

12. Advanced modern apprentices and trainees on other work-based learning programmes receive standard training and assessment plans. Assessment plans for trainees on other work-based learning programmes are rigid guides to the evidence trainees should compile. This includes tasks completed during off-the-job training, compounding the lack of customised learning. For example, material in trainees' portfolios, cross-referencing grids and work logs lack individuality, as they are based firmly on the course which all trainees must follow at the training centre. Advanced modern apprentices receive individual learning plans containing standard lists of tasks and sources of evidence, although assessors agree some customised targets with trainees for key skills. Trainees are not completing the level 1 NVQ at a pace or in ways which best suit their capabilities and approximately half of them are capable of completing higher levels of the NVQ.

13. Employers have little involvement in training and assessment. While employers have a sound appreciation of the training arrangements, they are not engaged in developing learning plans, setting learning targets, or identifying and gathering evidence of performance. In one case, an employer, training to be an assessor with a local college, was not party to discussions at which her employee's individual learning plan was agreed. Employers do not contribute fully to setting targets during progress reviews. Employers do not always become involved in analysing advanced modern apprentices' occupational skills as part of the initial assessment process. Initial interviews and the planning of learning often take place away from the workplace, at the training centre. Employers have a poor understanding of what happens during off-the-job learning sessions.

14. Recording of trainees' progression through the qualifications and frameworks is inadequate. Trainees struggle to provide a clear statement of their current position in relation to the requirements of their qualification. Landmark Training staff are unable to provide an accurate picture of the progress of each intake of trainees, as data on progression are not gathered centrally. Progress reviews are not used systematically to collect and record data on progression. Advanced modern apprentices do not play any significant role in cross-referencing evidence and are unclear about how their work is helping them to meet the NVQ standards and key skills criteria. For some, progress is slow. For example, after seven months on the programme most of the advanced modern apprentices have completed only one or two elements. While evidence is being gathered across a several units at any one time, this progress is not evident.



## Foundation for work

## Grade 3

15. Landmark Training offers two programmes under the *Learning Gateway*: mainstream life skills and life skills for students on programmes of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). The mainstream life skills programme is aimed at a group of young people who are disengaged and disaffected from traditional education and have low attainment in basic skills. Forty trainees are on the life skills programme. Twenty of these are following the ESOL programme for 16 hours each week for 16 weeks. Trainees attend the training centre for two days each week. Two hours each week are allocated for working on homework. All trainees are referred to Landmark Training by the careers service. The aim of the life skills programme is to give trainees the skills and confidence necessary to access full-time training, further education or employment and to improve spoken and written English skills. During the period of training, all trainees undertake basic skills and information technology training, personal development and job-search activities.

16. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths in the self-assessment report, including high rates of retention and achievement of milestones, but considered other strengths cited, including commitment of staff and the style of learning sessions, to be no more than normal practice. The company had made progress in addressing the weaknesses stated in their report. Inspectors identified three other weaknesses and awarded the same grade as that given by the company in its self-assessment report.

	Year	Starters	Milestone achieved	Completed individual training plan	Left early without NVQ	Left early with NVQ	Still in training	Left into a job or Further Education
Life skills for ESOL students	2000-01	50	24	24	6		20	5
	1999-00	18	17	16	2			
Mainstream	2000-01	53	28	28	5		20	2
	1999-00	12	11	11	1			2

	Life skills for ESOL students		Mainstream	
Year	2000-01	1999-2000	2000-01	1999-2000
Starters	50	18	53	12
Milestones Achieved	24	17	28	11
Completed ITP	24	16	28	11
Left early without qualifications	6	2	5	1
Left early with qualifications				
Still in training	20		20	
Left into a job or Further Education	5		2	2

### STRENGTHS

- ◆ high rates of retention, attendance and achievement of milestones
- ◆ highly motivated and focused trainees

### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ unstructured learning programme
- ◆ no opportunities for external accreditation or work tasters
- ◆ poor rates of progression upon completion of training

#### GOOD PRACTICE

*Trainees on the life skills programme regularly return to the company for ongoing advice and guidance after completing their training. During the inspection, two trainees returned for advice on job applications. One of these had left two years ago.*

17. The retention rate of trainees on the life skills programme is high. In the contractual year 1999-2000, 90 per cent of trainees completed the programme. Attendance registers for the same period show attendance at 90 per cent. In the year 2000-01, a total of 103 trainees started programmes. Fifty-one per cent achieved all the targets on their individual learning plans and achieved the milestones set as targets and 38 per cent are still in training, with 11 per cent leaving early. When trainees are directed to Landmark Training they are given a comprehensive interview and are assessed using appropriate basic skills tests. These are supplemented by additional ESOL tests. The results are passed to the trainers to ensure they are aware of the basic skills needs of individual trainees. This assessment determines whether a trainee starts on the mainstream or the ESOL programme.

18. Trainees are highly motivated and focused on what they want to achieve at the end of the programme. Trainers set work for them beyond the agreed training programme and encourage them to develop their basic skills and continue project work at times when they would not normally attend the training centre. Trainees

who have not completed schoolwork in the past complete these tasks with enthusiasm. Trainees are encouraged to recognise their strengths and support each other. This helps build up trainees' confidence and self-esteem. To ensure trainees benefit as much as possible from the programme, the trainer sets aside time to spend with individuals on specific areas of work.

#### **POOR PRACTICE**

*Trainees are eligible for four days' holiday during the period of training, but the company controls the dates of the holiday. In most cases, trainee's holiday is linked to the holiday periods of their trainers.*

19. Although the standard of training on the two programmes is good and there is good rapport between staff and trainees, the programme lacks structure and is poorly planned. It consists of a number of core components, including basic skills, information technology, social and personal development, project work and job-search activities. These components are not planned as part of a coherent programme of training and records of training are not routinely maintained or reviewed.

20. No accreditation in basic skills or spoken English is offered to trainees on the life skills programme. Trainees have requested these opportunities. Tasks completed by trainees could readily be used to accredit the key skills of communication and working with others.

21. Trainees have no opportunity to go on work placements and very few progress to either employment or further education or training at the end of their programmes. Data show that in 1999-2000 no trainees from the ESOL programme progressed to a job or further education and only 6 per cent of those leaving in 2000-01 progressed into work or further education. Progression from the mainstream programme was better, with 16 per cent going into further education in 1999-2000.

## **GENERIC AREAS**

### **Equal opportunities**

### **Grade 3**

22. Landmark Training has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy that relates to both trainees and staff. The director of the training centre is responsible for development and implementation of the equal opportunities policy. There are 77 trainees at Landmark Training, of whom one third are men. There are three trainees with disabilities. The company has made adaptations to the ground floor and installed a lift to allow wheelchair users to participate in training.

23. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths in the self-assessment report, but others were considered more appropriate to other generic areas. The company did not, in its self-assessment report, recognise the weakness regarding monitoring equal opportunities in the workplace. Inspector awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ active equal opportunities monitoring group
- ◆ high rate of participation by trainees from minority ethnic groups
- ◆ good representation of local minority ethnic groups among staff

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ no systematic monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ incomplete implementation of equal opportunities plan

24. The director of the training centre has direct responsibility for equal opportunities but all staff play an active role in ensuring equality of opportunity. Equal opportunity is a standing agenda item for all staff meetings and is discussed with staff at both supervisory and appraisal meetings. There is an equal opportunities monitoring group, which meets every two months. The group has a rolling membership which ensures that all staff have an involvement in the corporate equal opportunities policy. The monitoring group is responsible for reviewing and revising the policy and related practices. Equal opportunities is promoted across the organisation. All staff have participated in a two-day staff-development programme and equality of opportunity is covered at both staff and trainees' induction. When trainees require advice and guidance, staff are able to interpret for trainees for whom English is not the first language. Written text can be translated.

25. Landmark Training actively targets under-represented groups. Recent marketing publications include a range of photographs which reflect the ethnic mix of the trainees. The company is successful in working with trainees who have been excluded from school or other educational establishments. The training groups and teaching staff positively reflect the diverse ethnic mix of the local community. Fifty per cent of staff within the company are from minority ethnic backgrounds, as are 86 per cent of the trainees. The proportion of the population from minority ethnic groups in the borough is 42 per cent.

26. The policy and practices of employers are not regularly monitored or reviewed during visits, although equal opportunities is part of the standard progress-review process. Landmark Training expects all employers and work-placement providers to have an equal opportunities policy. A member of the Landmark Training's staff ensures there is a policy before any work placement is agreed. When an employer or work-placement provider does not have a policy it is expected to adopt Landmark Training's policy.

27. The equal opportunities action plan is not yet fully implemented. The company has routinely collected data on gender, ethnicity and disability over the past three years, but this evidence is not used for decisions in a planned way. The action plan requires staff to follow equal opportunities practices for initial interviews and the induction of trainees, but this is not yet fully actioned.

## **Trainee support**

## **Grade 4**

28. Trainees join Landmark Training through different routes. Those entering foundation for work programmes and administration trainees on programmes of other work-based learning for young people are referred to the company by the careers service. Advanced modern apprentices are already in employment when they are recruited, usually as a result of direct approaches to employers by Landmark Training as part of its sales activity. Unemployed trainees are interviewed by an assessor and take an initial assessment test in basic skills. Trainees are then referred to the programme which most suits their needs. These trainees take part in induction, either as part of a small group or individually.

29. Employed trainees have a first interview with a development officer. They are asked to complete a skills analysis form which is set against NVQ units. This forms part of the induction process. This first part of the induction also covers health and safety and equal opportunities. An assessor then visits the trainee and carries out an assessment of key skills. The results of this will be discussed and the individual learning plan amended accordingly. Some employers are involved at this stage. These activities combine to form the second part of induction, which also gives details of the advanced modern apprenticeship framework. Advanced modern apprentices and trainees on other work-based learning programmes participate in progress reviews with their assessors and workplace supervisors every eight weeks. Trainees on foundation for work programmes have reviews every four weeks.

30. In its self-assessment report, Landmark Training identified four strengths, covering objective advice and inductions, counselling, progress reviews and pastoral support. Inspectors agreed with the two of strengths relating to counselling and to pastoral support. The others were considered to reflect normal practice. The company identified four weaknesses, relating to the lack of observed initial assessments, inductions, individual learning plans and the lateness of some progress reviews, and information on progression. The first weakness was considered more appropriate to quality assurance. Inspectors agreed with the other weakness. Inspectors found additional weaknesses and awarded a grade lower than that given by the company.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good welfare and personal support
- ◆ regular, well-promoted counselling service

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ unsystematic initial assessment
- ◆ poorly structured induction on programmes in administration
- ◆ little depth and target-setting in progress reviews

**POOR PRACTICE**

*An induction session for new trainees on other work-based learning programmes for young people, which concentrated on NVQs and assessment, was delivered without a lesson plan, with no use of visual images or practical exercises. A handbook, used as the basis for the session, was not appropriate to NVQ at level 1 as it contained complex terms and jargon.*

31. Landmark Training provides good levels of personal support to trainees to remove barriers to learning. Examples include supporting trainees through difficulties with housing, harassment at work and domestic problems. Job-search support is integrated with the learning programme for unemployed trainees. Additional individual support is planned for those nearing the end of their programme and includes help with letter writing, application forms and researching vacancies. Landmark Training works hard to present trainees to employers in a professional manner to enable them to gain work placements. Trainees are accompanied to interviews when they are unfamiliar with modes of transport and employers' locations. Trainees benefit significantly from the personal and professional support of assessors and other staff. They know whom to approach and find staff accessible and responsive to their needs. Employers compliment the company on its standard of communication, frequency of contact, and responsiveness to issues.

32. There is a qualified counsellor at Landmark Training who gives trainees weekly opportunities to discuss personal issues confidentially. Trainees receive help with issues such as benefits, relationships and personal problems. Other sources of support are well publicised on notice boards around the training centre. Some interactions between staff and trainees are not recorded and some staff prefer not to give details in order to protect confidentiality. If these staff leave, the issues will not be known by new staff.

33. The results of initial assessment are not clearly linked to individual learning plans. All administration trainees have standardised plans which do not contain the results of initial assessments such as skills analyses. Key skills assessments for advanced modern apprentices do not result in clear planning for additional learning, such as that required in preparation for external assessments. Trainees are not clear about why they have taken basic skills tests, skills analyses and key skills assessments, and how the results affect their training. Basic skills tests are applied selectively to those trainees with low results in their GCSEs and, depending on their results, trainees are referred to trainers for basic skills training.

34. Skills analyses for advanced modern apprentices lack depth, as they are limited to a series of closed questions based on the NVQ elements. There is no analysis relating to key skills. There is insufficient exploration of the content of advanced modern apprentices' work roles to prioritise assessment and identify any learning gaps. There is no exploration of trainees' learning styles to help assessors and employers plan training. For example, specific plans or learning goals are not agreed as part of their training plans for trainees lacking in confidence. Assessors expect such personal skills to develop as trainees progress through the programme. Prior learning is not used to avoid duplication in learning and assessment. Initial assessments do not provide a systematic link to learning plans.

35. In programmes other than foundation for work, the induction is fragmented and lacks a clear structure. Landmark Training uses check lists and handouts to

help trainees cover key areas such as their rights and responsibilities, and grievance procedures. In addition, trainees receive a handbook setting out Landmark Training's policies. Assessors cover topics relating to off-the-job training and qualifications and reinforce the content of the induction given by the development officer by talking to trainees and asking them to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire is multiple-choice style and does not explore a trainee's grasp of underlying principles. Assessors provide trainees with an induction to NVQs, using a handbook as a reference tool. The handbook contains too much jargon, and is unsuitable for trainees at NVQ level 1. Difficult concepts such as evidence, formative and summative assessment, and performance criteria are not presented plainly. The handbook emphasises the collection of paper-based evidence and a trainee-led approach to assessment, which is not appropriate to all trainees at NVQ level 1. Induction sessions are poorly planned and lack a sufficient range of learning activities to stimulate trainees. There is no systematic monitoring of employers or work-placement providers. Landmark Training provides employers and trainees with check lists, but staff leave workplace induction to employers without checking their quality.

36. Progress reviews are narrow in scope and fail to explore in sufficient depth the wider aspects of the trainee's development such as career aspirations, tasks undertaken at work and satisfaction with the training. There is insufficient gathering and recording of progress against the work set and the qualifications. The progress-review form does not have a facility for recording this data. Reviews are carried out on time, in trainees' places of work, and invariably involve employers. Trainees and employers contribute their own written comments and progress-review forms contain a rating system, which encourages all parties to consider the trainee's attendance and productivity, as well as personal skills. Many of the targets set are clear and specific but employers and trainees do not always contribute to target-setting. The involvement of employers in progress reviews generates a good amount of information about trainees' learning at work but it is not recorded fully on the progress-review form.

## **Management of training**

## **Grade 4**

37. Landmark Training employs nine staff. The company has undergone significant staff changes within the past six months with new staff joining the management team. The training-centre director, the head of training and the development and training team leader have all been recently appointed. There have also been new appointments in the team of trainers/assessors. Landmark Training is a registered charity, limited by guarantee. The training-centre director reports to a board of trustees, which at full complement has five members but at the time of inspection had only three. The company has been accredited with the Investors in People Standard and was re-accredited in 2000. The company is based in one building which all trainees attend for training. There are four training rooms and one computer room.



38. Inspectors agreed with two of the strengths in the self-assessment report but considered the co-operative working relationships to be no more than normal practice. The company has begun to address some of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, but inspectors identified two additional weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

### STRENGTHS

- ◆ good staff-appraisal scheme
- ◆ effective internal communication

### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no staff training in teaching basic skills
- ◆ ineffective use of management-information system
- ◆ no systematic review of policies and procedures

#### GOOD PRACTICE

*The company has had a member of staff from an international banking group working on secondment to set up the new management-information system. This has enabled it to get up-to-date expertise at no financial cost.*

39. The company has a good staff-appraisal system. Meetings involving the appraisee, the line manager and the training centre director used to be carried out annually but the company is now moving towards appraisals every quarter. The line manager and the appraisee both complete an appraisal form and then meet to discuss it. The meetings cover key areas of work, performance, quality assurance, timekeeping and interpersonal relationships. There is plenty of opportunity for comments to be made by both the appraiser and the appraisee. At the end of the meeting, a summary of action points is drawn up which include training and development needs and financial targets. The appraisal meeting is supplemented by supervision interviews. These are carried out monthly and the purpose is to oversee and manage performance, to assist personal development and to improve staff morale with a view to maintaining and raising standards and practice. The supervision interviews give staff the chance to discuss issues in private without having to wait for an appraisal interview. The supervision interviews have resulted in management addressing the high levels of stress experienced by trainers in one area of the company's work and in another trainer being appointed.

40. There is a range of internal meetings involving all staff. The trustees meet every two months, when they receive a report from the training-centre director. This report is succinct and covers all areas of Landmark Training's work. Reflecting the recent staff changes, the minutes of trustee's meetings show a bias towards personnel issues and cover areas such as appointing staff, finance and pensions. Additionally there are meetings for Landmark Training's staff, including NVQ meetings, whole staff meetings and occupational area meetings. The NVQ meetings typically cover the frequency of progress reviews, induction, equal opportunities and the ratio of worksheets to real workplace activities in the trainees' portfolios. The dates for the staff meetings are planned for the year in advance. Minutes are concise and clear and circulated to all staff. The minutes



record action which has to be carried out. There is a set agenda for the meetings but staff are given the opportunity to add items. Any new procedures or amendments to procedures are introduced through the staff meeting process.

41. Only one member of the life skills staff team is qualified and experienced in basic skills training. Basic skills support and the opportunity to gain wordpower and numberpower qualifications are available only to administration trainees on other work-based learning programmes and not to trainees on the foundation for work programme. Wordpower training is given by staff responsible for occupational areas and internally verified by the head of training. The company has not recognised the need to recruit new staff or support existing staff through training in this area, and is unaware of national initiatives regarding the basic skills curriculum, development and training.

42. The company has invested in a new management-information system. Not all of the previous records have been transferred to the new system and it is still necessary for staff to produce some statistical data manually. The new system is capable of being used to produce many reports but currently it is used only to list trainees, their dates of starting and ending on programmes and some equal opportunities data. The information is not used to aid management decisions. The company does not, for example, compare results of trainees from different minority ethnic backgrounds.

43. There is a procedural file which contains copies of all the procedures covering all areas of the company's work. Some of the procedures are not dated and others have not been updated for many years. For example, the grievance procedure is dated 1996 and the disciplinary procedure 1995. The newer procedures are dated and have a version number. A three-year business plan was written to cover 2000 to 2003, with three review dates given for 2000. Only one review took place, when two new objectives were added.

## Quality assurance

## Grade 4

44. The training-centre director is responsible for the development and review of quality assurance policies and procedures. The policies and procedures are set out in a manual which is issued to all staff. Quality assurance arrangements meet both the TEC's and the awarding body's requirements. The company identified seven strengths in its self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with two of the strengths and considered the others to be normal practice. Inspectors identified two significant weaknesses and awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ well-established self-assessment process
- ◆ wide range of feedback

### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ untested nature of quality assurance procedures
- ◆ no systematic overall evaluation of training

45. The self-assessment process is well established. All staff were involved in preparing the report. The first self-assessment meetings of staff were brainstorming sessions. Following these initial meetings, various occupational groups met to discuss the strengths and weaknesses and propose a grade for each occupational area. The whole staff met to discuss and debate the generic areas of the report. The head of training wrote the final version of the sections of the report on generic areas. For each strength and weakness given in the self-assessment report, the company gave a brief outline of why it had been included and the impact it considered it had on trainees. Managers were aware of many of the weaknesses that were found by inspectors but had not attached significant importance to them and in two areas had given higher grades than those given by inspectors. Overall, the self-assessment had been successful in identifying the main strengths and weaknesses. An action plan has been drawn up and staff are working towards addressing the weaknesses and improving the training.

46. The company requests feedback from employers and trainees. Employers are asked to complete a questionnaire once a year. This has previously been anonymous but employers are now asked to give their names so that any appropriate action can be taken. The company receives additional feedback from employers as most of them attend and take part in review meetings. Trainees complete two questionnaires, distributed at set times in the year. The questionnaire differs in format for trainees on work placement and some questions are aimed at their working experience. The company previously gave all trainees a questionnaire to be completed when leaving the programme but only a small number were returned. The new director has now started holding individual interviews with all trainees before they leave the programme. The careers service is also asked to comment on its relationship with Landmark Training. All questionnaires are analysed and the results distributed to staff.

47. The company has a quality assurance manual which is issued to all staff. It contains a range of policies and practices, including a quality assurance policy statement, induction and initial assessment policies, and a satisfactory internal verification policy and procedures. There is also a range of auditing procedures. Most of the quality assurance and auditing procedures have been written only in the previous six months and have not, therefore, been operational for long enough to see that they are working effectively.

48. There is no systematic evaluation of the quality of training across all aspects of the programmes, including induction and progress reviews. Two years ago, a system to observe in-house training and give feedback to trainers on their performance was introduced. This supplemented a system of trainers being observed carrying out assessments. New procedures to observe and review the



other areas are being introduced. Individual feedback is given but good practice is not shared across the occupational areas. No time is set aside for all the separate evaluations to be brought together, the whole programme discussed in terms of its strengths and weaknesses, and action to be taken.